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MY EXPERIENCES OF THE BOER WAR

COUNT STERNBERG

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MY EXPERIENCES OF THE BOER WAR

BY

COUNT STERNBERG

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY
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INTRODUCTION

THE quantity of foreign criticism on the war in South Africa leaves nothing to be desired. The quality may be inferred from the fact that one of the best known of German military historians declares that khaki was not taken into wear until after many defeats; that the English infantry attacked in solid line; that volleys were the only species of fire employed; and that the Boers never made use of the spade! The critics have probably been misled by the gutter press, for from no other source could the many false statements which form the basis of their criticism have been derived; and they have no doubt been greatly hampered by their

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want of experience of modern war. It is disappointing, at the same time, to find such deep students of European campaigns so utterly abroad when they approach another continent; and men who have been, and are perhaps still, soldiers, so careless of fact and so forgetful of fair play. The majority of the articles dealing with the campaign are not only remarkable for inaccuracy, but display an almost incredible disregard of the peculiar features of the theatre of war, of the nature of the fighting, of the disloyalty among the Dutch Colonists, and of the advantages possessed by the Boers. Others, again, betray a large measure of pure spite, inspired, it would seem, by the uneasy consciousness that the command of the sea means more than the writers have hitherto been willing to admit, and by utter disgust at the revelation of the unity of the British Empire.

Jealousy and injustice, however, do not greatly concern us. It is much more to the purpose to recognise that the sweeping con-

demnation lavished, in so many quarters, on our strategy and tactics is more likely to have been provoked by irritation than to be the result of patient investigation.

The art of war is diligently studied in Continental armies, and in certain respects with very good results. As regards the defence of the frontier on the outbreak of war, and the initial steps of a campaign in any part of their dominions, the great European Powers are probably better prepared than ourselves. The fortresses are garrisoned; the magazines full to the very doors; the transport effectively organised; the maps ready for issue; the positions where the troops are to concentrate selected; and the orders for their movements and distribution already drawn up. The circumstances, however, are widely different. The frontiers of the European Powers, except Russia, are, in the first place, of very limited extent compared with those of the British Empire; and, in the second, if they were not adequately protected, they

might be attacked at any moment in overwhelming force. Nevertheless, when our critics reproach us for the neglect of precaution, it may be admitted that they are theoretically correct. Here, however, they are on ground where they may be trusted not to err. The broad principles which govern the defence of an exposed frontier are the same everywhere. Fortresses, magazines, transport, maps, positions, are always necessary; and it is doubtless true that, had Natal been garrisoned by 20,000 men, and Ladysmith adequately fortified, Sir Redvers Buller might have marched straight into the Free State, and the conquest of the Republics have been far less costly.

It is when the critics come to discuss the strategical movements of the campaign, as distinguished from the strategical preparation, that they betray their limitations. By this time they have probably been enlightened by the publication of the Commander-in-Chief's despatches; but it is impossible not

to be struck by the narrow formalism, and often unpractical character, of their strategical and tactical conceptions. If they are to be taken as the exponents of foreign military thought, then the study of the art of war has indeed fallen on evil days. In almost every article we mark the same defects. First, an entire ignorance of our system of government, of the elementary principles of political economy, and of the responsibilities of a great Colonial Empire. Second, a reckless treatment of evidence. Third, a positive disinclination to admit that the organisation, drill, training, and composition of Continental armies might possibly be bettered; and, lastly, the habit of testing strategical and tactical operations by a number of hard-and-fast rules.

The first of these we might pass by without further comment, were it not that ignorance of factors of such importance points either to superficial methods of study or to a want of grasp. Nor would the second be

worth notice if it did not lead us to suspect that the theorists are not over-scrupulous as to the means by which they arrive at their conclusions. The third, to be dealt with later, is a fault more serious than the last—the habit of testing everything by the so-called rules of war. How often must the critics in question have told the story of the old Austrian generals and the young Napoleon! And yet, like all pure theorists, they are rapidly degenerating into formalists of exactly the same type as the unfortunate veterans whom the great breaker of rules so hardly treated. It is not to be wondered at. Both strategy and tactics must be studied practically as well as theoretically—on the field as well as at manœuvres or in the study; and unless a soldier has a practical acquaintance with war; unless he is familiar, from personal contact, with the conditions that govern both strategy and tactics; unless he understands that in war it is always the unexpected that happens; he is not likely,

except his genius be Napoleonic, to be worth much as either critic or leader. More than this, the man who has never had to do with the conception and execution of strategical movements is pretty certain to overlook the difficulty of putting principles into practice, to underrate the part played by the unforeseen; and, in consequence, to be too apt to believe that rules and precedents are of far greater importance than common-sense, and that the methods sanctioned by previous practice are the only methods that a general should use.

War, however, is no exact science; it has no fixed code of rules. All that can be said is that there is one good working principle—the concentration of superior force at the decisive point—which, if applied, will generally bring about success; and a good many others which it is risky, but not necessarily fatal, to infringe. But the theorists will have it that the rules of war are as inflexible as the Ten Commandments.

'Such and such a principle was violated,' they cry, 'therefore the strategy was unsound.' It may be remarked, however, that they never seem to consider whether any other strategy was possible. For example, the German military historian already referred to declares that when the Boers invested Ladysmith 'they hoped to force the English to send their main force to Natal. General Buller,' he continues, 'foolishly complied with their desire, and split up his army corps so that on no one of the three fields of operations could he appear with the necessary superiority.' Passing by the fact that the Boers wanted to occupy Natal, and not to attract the main English army thither, it will be observed that the critic makes no attempt to discuss the reason which induced Sir Redvers Buller to act as he did, nor does he suggest an alternative. It is quite enough for him that the General did not apply the first rule of strategy. Whether it was practical to do so he never stays to consider;

and yet the circumstances were such that the division of the army corps into three parts, on three different lines of operations, was absolutely unavoidable. Had Ladysmith and Kimberley been well-found fortresses of modern type, such as the German critic is accustomed to see on European frontiers, they might for the time being have been left to themselves, while the army corps marched *en masse* upon Bloemfontein. But both Ladysmith and Kimberley, as it seemed at the time, and as the writer himself admits, might have been stormed before the army corps could be concentrated; and had either one or the other fallen, it was within the bounds of probability that the whole of the Cape Dutch would have risen in rebellion. In order to prevent the Boers from pressing the sieges with vigour, as well as to keep the would-be rebels in suspense, Sir Redvers Buller had absolutely no alternative but to attempt to relieve both garrisons simultaneously.

Other instances, displaying even greater pedantry, might be cited; but it is sufficient to note that in every single case the critic entirely fails to grasp the bearing of conditions which he has never before contemplated, and that he makes no allowance whatever for the difference between war in South Africa and war in Europe.

The truth is that the military writers of the Continent are so saturated with the campaign of 1870–71, and have confined their industry so closely to the conditions of one theatre of war—the tract of fertile, thickly populated, and highly civilised country which lies between Berlin and Paris—that they understand war under one aspect only. They are doubtless quite right to concentrate their attention on what is of vital importance to themselves. But we are not, therefore, bound to believe that they are good judges of warfare under conditions with which they are absolutely unfamiliar, nor that the rules which they deduce from events which

occurred thirty years ago, on a theatre of war of the easiest and most favourable character, are of universal application. In fact, there is good reason to suspect that their intense devotion to one aspect of war and a single series of events is acting adversely on their own armies. As has been already said, in war it is always the unexpected that happens. There is no finality in either strategy or tactics. The theorist may believe that he has anticipated everything that can possibly occur; but history tells us that in almost every campaign some new factor—produced sometimes by accident, sometimes by the genius of an individual, sometimes by a national instinct—takes even the most experienced by surprise, and often completely reverses the accepted teaching of the time. So in the early battles of Napoleon the rigid masses of Austrians and Prussians broke up into bewildered fragments under the fire of the French skirmishers, and fell an easy prey to the columns

in rear. In the Peninsula, on the other hand, those same skirmishers, met by the two-deep line and its broad front of musketry, recoiled helplessly on the columns whose advance they could no longer cover. In these instances the surprise was tactical; in others it has been strategical—in 1870, for example, the rising of the French people and the creation of the National Army, a proceeding which even Moltke considered absolutely contrary to rule; in 1866, Moltke's invasion on two distinct lines of operation, an innovation which still shocks the theorist; in 1877, Plevna; and in 1899, the Boer invasion of Natal.

Furthermore, in every campaign one side or the other will have to face conditions for which it is impossible to make provision. Defeat, as a rule, destroys the organisation of an army, scatters the transport, reduces one or more arms of the service to inefficiency, and puts out of gear the whole machinery of the Staff. Here neither rule

nor precedent will avail. Common-sense, the resourcefulness which is born of a varied experience, and the habit of dealing with questions of organisation to suit special circumstances, are alone to be relied on where a new army has to be constituted from the *disjecta membra* of an old one. When Lord Roberts landed at Cape Town on January 10, 1900, and decided to march on Bloemfontein, and so relieve both Kimberley and Ladysmith, the troops available for the enterprise were scattered in independent commands over a huge tract of country. There was no army organisation. There was very little transport. There was a deficiency of mounted men. The railway facilities were limited. There was no plan of campaign, and there was hardly any information regarding the physical features of the country to be invaded. In short, except the organisation of the communications, almost everything had to be dealt with *de novo*. Nevertheless, a month later an army 35,000

strong, including 10,000 mounted men, 116 guns, and transport sufficient to enable it to reach Bloemfontein, over 100 miles from the rendezvous, was concentrated between the Orange and the Modder. In those thirty days the soldiers whose good luck associated them with this achievement probably learnt more of war, and of the training best adapted to its successful conduct, than any theorist could teach them; and if the question were put to them, 'Is it likely that men trained on a cut-and-dried system, whose reliance is on rule and precedent, and whose experience is even narrower than their reading, would have dealt so effectively with such extraordinary conditions?' not one would reply in the affirmative.

Nearly a century ago a great conqueror scoffed at the 'Sepoy General' who had landed in Portugal with a tiny army. Yet that Sepoy General, who had seen war under many aspects, who had all his service been organising, and improvising, and dealing with

different races in different climates, and who, at the same time, was a vigilant student of European warfare, was the only general that neither Napoleon nor his marshals could overthrow. We may still be permitted to believe that the training of the British officer, involving, as it does, like that of Wellington, a knowledge of many men, of many climates, of many lands, and of many modes of fighting, does more to sharpen and quicken both thought and action than a knowledge of a single campaign and the practice of peace manœuvres under unvarying conditions.

The same reluctance to dive deep enough to find the truth and to make just allowances characterises the reflections on the tactics as on the strategy of the campaign. It is not to be denied that the grand tactics—that is to say, the management of the battles and the combination of the three arms—have been sometimes faulty. No generals, however, even of the school of Moltke, are infallible ; and, in any case, failures in leader-

ship are capable of so many interpretations that the question is too large for discussion here. But as regards minor tactics, such as outposts, reconnaissance, formation under fire, and methods of attack, the critics give far too little credit, not only to the peculiar conditions of South African war and the hunter's craft of the Boer marksman, but to the terribly demoralising effect of modern fire and the embarrassments created by smokeless powder. These last are the important features of the campaign, and it is with something more than surprise that we note a stubborn refusal to admit that the flat trajectory of the small-bore rifle, together with the invisibility of the man who uses it, have wrought a complete revolution in the art of fighting battles.

To have to confess that the organisation and training of their gigantic armies is based on antiquated principles would be more than humiliating: it would be the signal for most costly and laborious reforms. Yet the phenomena of the South African conflict permit

no doubt whatever that the revolution is an accomplished fact. It is foolish, therefore, to say the least, to attempt to explain away these phenomena by questioning the courage of the English infantry, the intelligence of the cavalry, or by calmly assuming that our methods of attack were prehistoric, that our shooting was bad, and our patrolling careless. Hasty generalisations, based on the very vaguest hearsay, and put forward by theorists who are notoriously prone to superficial analysis, are not likely to find acceptance.

Nor is it to be forgotten that the last tactical revolution was produced by exactly the same causes as the present. With the advent of the breechloading rifles in the decade 1860–70 the rate of fire was more than doubled, the trajectory half as flat again, the accuracy at all but short ranges at least twice as great. Yet the superiority of the first breechloaders to the weapon they superseded was assuredly not more marked than the superiority of the

small-bore repeater, in rate of fire, in flatness of trajectory, and in accuracy, to the large-bore single-loader; and in 1860–70 the powder remained unchanged.

The nature of the revolution may be stated in a few words:

1. Infantry, attacking over open ground, must move in successive lines of skirmishers extended at wide intervals.

2. Cavalry, armed, trained, and equipped as the cavalry of the Continent, is as obsolete as the Crusaders.

3. Reconnaissance, even more important than heretofore, is far more difficult.

To the first two of these propositions the theorists will take desperate exception. They have already proclaimed that the attack in line of skirmishers was simply adopted, both by ourselves and by the Boers, because neither we nor they knew better, and that Continental soldiers would have found no need to change their ordinary formations. The truth is, however, that our ordinary

formations, previous to the war, were almost identically the same as those of other armies ; but that our officers, thanks to the experience of the Tirah campaign, and to a very general instinct in favour of less rigid methods, recognised, before even a shot was fired, that what they had practised in peace was utterly unsuited to the Mauser-swept battlefield. On hardly a single occasion was the usage of the manœuvre-ground adhered to. At least five paces between skirmishers, with supports and reserves in the same open order, was the rule from the very first ; and the fact that the normal formations were so unanimously discarded speaks as highly for the resourcefulness of the British officer as the fact that the formations so unanimously substituted proved admirably adapted to the new conditions.

We shall not expect to see our example universally followed. At the last autumn manœuvres of the Continental armies the old system of attack still held the field ; and thick

firing lines, supported by closed bodies and offering ideal targets, stolidly advanced, without the slightest attempt to make use of the advantages of the ground, against the most formidable positions. It is still, too, an article of faith that four things only are necessary to success in the infantry attack—viz., discipline, energy, unity, and numbers. Such has been the opinion of Continental soldiers since the close of the Franco-German war, and until their experience has been enlarged they are not likely to abandon it. Nevertheless, it contains two fatal flaws. First, that in these days of a flat trajectory and the magazine, mere weight of numbers, and the piling of battalion on battalion, will have the same effect as in the days of Napoleon. Second, that a dense line, formed of as many rifles as can find room, halting at intervals, will pour in so heavy and effective a fire as to render the return fire of the defenders comparatively innocuous.

It is not to be denied that numerical superiority is generally essential to success. But superiority, or at least equality of *moral*, is just as necessary; and when the preponderating masses suffer enormous losses; when they feel, as they will feel, that other and less costly means of achieving the same end might have been adopted, what will become of their *moral*? Good troops are not, indeed, to be stopped by the fear of heavy losses, even up to 30 or 40 per cent., if they understand that by no other means can victory be attained. But they are very easily stopped if they once come to believe that they are unintelligently handled; and the wise leader is he who yields, so far as discipline allows, to the instincts of those who follow him. Numbers thrown in after the same reckless fashion as they were thrown in by Napoleon at Wagram, or by Grant at Spotsylvania, or by Steinmetz at Gravelotte, may win once; but even the

best-disciplined army will not readily respond to a second call of the like nature.

Yet if troops are formed in dense lines from the very first they must be prepared to be lavish of their blood. The experience of the battlefield, putting aside mere common-sense, proves conclusively that against a well-covered enemy the troops advancing to the attack effect very little by their fire until they arrive within 500 or 600 yards of the position. With smokeless powder they cannot even see the target; and, even if the defenders are to a certain extent disturbed by the storm of bullets flying overhead, they can hardly fail, if they do no more than keep their rifles horizontal, to play havoc with the mass opposed to them. It is argued, on the other hand, that a thin line of skirmishers must necessarily lose in the same ratio. But mathematical formulæ do not hold good upon the battlefield. The fact remains that a thin line of skirmishers suffers much less in proportion than a thick one; and, more-

over, the moral effect is vastly different. Twenty-five skirmishers covering 250 yards of front will hardly notice the loss of five of their number; 250 men, shoulder to shoulder, will be sensibly affected by the loss of fifty.

Nor is there the slightest reason that discipline, energy, and unity should not be as conspicuous in the attack of skirmishers as in the attack of denser lines. The former method demands much more from the individual; and the individual, both officer and soldier, must therefore be trained and accustomed to independent action. But troops so trained will show a higher intelligence than others, and higher discipline, for it will not be merely a mechanical product; and intelligence, backed by discipline, is the surest guarantee of energetic and united action.

The objection most frequently urged against the attack by skirmishers who take advantage of all cover, avoid all unnecessary exposure, and gain ground to the front by stealth rather than by dash, is that the men

become too careful of their lives. But is not this method of attack the reflection and the extension of good leading? The most brilliant offensive victories are not those which were mere 'bludgeon work,' and cost the most blood; but those which were won by surprise, by adroit manœuvre, by mystifying and misleading the enemy, by turning the ground to the best account, and of which the butcher's bill was small. How trifling was the loss, comparatively speaking, in many of the earlier and more decisive battles of Napoleon; how few English soldiers fell at the passage of the Douro, at Salamanca, at Vittoria, on the Bidassoa, and in the astonishing fight on the Nivelle; how few Germans at Sedan; and yet the generalship was of the highest order.

It may be said, however, that it is one thing for a general to spare his men, and another for the men to spare themselves; and undoubtedly the new system demands the very strictest discipline, high training,

and resolute leaders. But if the new system is dangerous the old is impossible, except at a cost of life which no army and no nation can afford.

If the truth be told, the tactics of certain foreign armies, of which the chief characteristic is that they rely on the momentum of the mass rather than the skill of the individual, are as degenerate and out of date as the Prussian tactics in 1806, and from the same cause. A long peace is generally fatal to military efficiency. Too little experience of war and too much experience of field-days have always the same results—rigid and unvarying formations, attacks ruled by regulations instead of common-sense, and the uniformity of the drill-ground in every phase of the soldier's training. Uniformity is simple; it is easily taught, and it is eminently picturesque; it simplifies the task of inspecting officers; it is agreeable to the centralising tendencies of human nature; and when it appears in the guise of well-ordered lines,

advancing with mechanical precision, it has a specious appearance of power and discipline, especially when compared with the irregular movements of a swarm of skirmishers. Furthermore, it is far less difficult to train men to work in mass than independently. Thus order, steadiness, and uniformity become a fetish; officers and men are drilled, not trained; and all individuality, however it may be encouraged by regulations, in practice is quietly repressed.

But if a state of profound peace has robbed the Continental infantry of elasticity, it has been even more mischievous for the sister arm. Even our own cavalry, when it took the field in 1899, was more or less paralysed by the burden of effete traditions. Despite the lessons of the American and the Russo-Turkish wars, it had been trained, so far as battle was concerned, to shock tactics, and to little else. It was not equipped for great mobility; of fighting on foot it knew but little; and when confronted by the Boer

riflemen the inferiority of the carbine placed it at a great disadvantage.

Yet it has long been clear that the opportunities for shock tactics are very rare, and that for once cavalry has the chance of charging it is twenty times compelled to dismount and fire. Moreover, it is quite open to question whether the fire-arm, on all occasions except in the pursuit of an absolutely demoralised enemy, is not more deadly than lance or sabre; and whether, in this particular phase of battle, a cavalry which manœuvres like clock-work and charges in exactly dressed lines is a whit more formidable than any scratch pack of good horsemen whose hearts are in the right place. Be this as it may, the South African war affords much additional proof that cavalry must be thoroughly trained, properly equipped for dismounted action, and made far more mobile. The extraordinary results, strategical as well as tactical, that may be produced by mobility have been conclusively demonstrated; and

it is clear as noon-day that a mounted force as mobile as the Boers, and equal—as were Sheridan's troopers—to any emergency of attack or defence, will be a most effective weapon, even on a European theatre of war, in the hands of the strategist who grasps its possibilities.

The majority of our critics, however, are very far from taking to heart this obvious lesson; nor do they seem to have realised that the small-bore and smokeless powder have destroyed the last vestiges of the traditional *rôle* of cavalry. Otherwise they would have been less ready to condemn the conduct of our horsemen in South Africa, nor would they have attributed many apparent failures, due in reality to defects which every European cavalry possesses, to a want of enterprise and daring. It may safely be said that no cavalry could have done better than our own regulars; not even on reconnaissance, for, under the new conditions, cavalry of the existing type is of very little value except to

keep touch with the enemy's scouts. As to bringing in information of the extent of the enemy's position, of the numbers that hold it, guns, entrenchments, and the like, it is more powerless than ever. Than ever, because cavalry against a skilful enemy has never been a fully effective means of finding out what the General most wants to know; and in this respect the experiences of the Franco-German campaign are most misleading. In fact, it is hardly too much to say that, owing to these experiences, reconnaissance has become a lost art. Thanks to the utter supineness of the French, the German squadrons, whenever they were boldly handled, discovered a great deal; but to think that against a vigilant and astute enemy, armed with a magazine rifle, it could have done the same is to imagine a vain thing. The reconnaissance of a position is a business of which the Staff must arrange the details and provide the means; it is certainly not the work of the cavalry alone. Even in the era of the flint-

lock musket it was not on the cavalry patrols that good generals relied for the detailed information they required before committing their troops to battle. To Napoleon and Wellington the cavalry were merely one of many sources of intelligence. Personal observation, often extending over several days, was a far surer source, especially when supplemented by the reports of picked Staff officers and well-paid spies.

But, even if we admit that the critics have some grounds, though not those on which they take their stand, for questioning the efficiency of our cavalry, their sneers at the spirit and endurance of our infantry are absolutely unjustified. It would have, no doubt, been exceedingly gratifying to those who have to sing the virtues of the conscript had the Anglo-Saxon system of voluntary service proved a broken reed ; and the depth of their disappointment is to be measured by the malevolence of their abuse. A great

deal has been made of the comparatively slight loss in several of the more important engagements—notably in those which ended in defeat; and it has been very generally implied that our reverses were in great part due to a want of staying power in the men. The arguments brought forward would be peculiar were they not of a piece with those employed elsewhere. In the first place, comparisons are made with the losses suffered by Continental troops in various battles, with the view of establishing the conclusion that our infantry would not face more than a very small percentage of loss. For example, a German writer gives the following table:

An Austrian regiment in 1866 lost 46 per cent.

Several French regiments at Wörth, in 1870, lost 90 per cent.

Several Russian regiments in 1877 lost between 50 and 75 per cent.

Several Prussian regiments at Mars-la-Tour, in 1870, lost between 37 and 45 per cent.

On the other hand, he declares that our average loss on any one occasion never exceeded 10 per cent.

But mark the utter worthlessness of his statistics! The large majority of the regiments alluded to owed their heavy losses to the fact that they were badly beaten, and either retreated under fire—the most costly operation in war—or surrendered. Surely this is no proof of superior endurance or *moral*. If he thinks it is, what will he say of the following?

A force 4,000 strong held Spion Kop, a position on which there was not room for more than 500, until it received orders to retreat, although the loss was 38 per cent.

On February 23, 1900, the Irish Brigade lost over 50 per cent.; and, although it carried only one line of trenches, it remained all night, and the whole of the next day,

within a few hundred yards of the second line, and beat back a hot counter-attack.

At Magersfontein the Black Watch, although it lost 75 per cent. in officers and over 35 per cent. in men, held on, under a heavy and continuous fire at short range, from 4 in the morning till 1 in the afternoon.

And there is much more to be said. Whatever might be the percentage of casualties our battalions suffered, they never lost their *moral*. In the fighting on the Tugela those that lost most severely one day were foremost in the fight the next; and although each day success seemed further off, and the ranks grew thinner, yet the only effect on the rank and file was to increase their resolution. Let the critics of our soldiers ponder these facts, let them recall the fine marching and patient endurance of the half-starved regiments, and if they still see no cause to doubt the superiority of the conscript, they know little of war.

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But a more serious charge than this statistical juggling has been brought against the men. At a lecture in Vienna, attended by the *élite* of the Austro-Hungarian Staff, it was stated that there were times when the troops could not be got to advance after a loss of only 3 to 9 per cent., and that at Stormberg, Magersfontein, and Colenso they took to flight. Needless to say, no evidence was produced; and we can only presume that the lecturer was indebted for his information to the columns of the anti-British press. Had he known that the troops at Colenso retired by order of the General-in-chief, and retired with the utmost unwillingness; had he known that at Stormberg they were suddenly assailed by a heavy flank fire at short range; that, instead of running in panic, they advanced upon the enemy, and only retired when they found that he was posted on the crest of an inaccessible cliff; had he known that at Magersfontein the Highland Brigade held on, in a perfectly

hopeless position, in the midsummer blaze of a South African sun and without water, for more than nine long hours; had he known that throughout the campaign the great difficulty was not to get the men to advance, but to prevent them advancing prematurely — he would probably have realised that the failures of an indomitable soldiery were due to mistakes in leading and to the peculiar conditions of modern battle.

What foreign soldiers cannot, or perhaps will not, see is that the war in South Africa, like the war in the Peninsula and the Civil War in America, is a triumph for the principle of voluntary service. The *moral* of conscript armies has always been their weakest point; and it is the hope that the *moral* of the volunteer is no longer of a higher type that accounts for unwarrantable inferences and the unscrupulous manipulation of flimsy evidence. For ourselves, we are content to know that the manhood of the race shows no signs of deterioration. If

an army composed, not of regulars alone, but in great part of men with little or no special training, has proved capable, in circumstances of peculiar difficulty, of conquering a territory as large as Central Europe, bravely and cunningly defended, we need not yet be ashamed to speak with our enemies in the gate.

Nevertheless, it is just as well that the misrepresentations of our critics should be exposed. Reform is the natural outcome of the revolution; and the revolution in tactics must involve many new departures, both in training and organisation. Expert advisers will naturally be the chief guides in determining their scope and character; but it is to be remembered that this is a question of something more than professional interest. The old order has given place to the new. The old Royal Army, recruited exclusively in the British Isles and India, has passed away. It is an Imperial Army with which our legislators will have to deal—an army of which the Colonial forces will form an integral part;

in which hundreds of regiments of unfamiliar title—the 'Young Guard' of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand—will stand side by side with those whose names are household words. With the establishment, the efficiency, and the maintenance of the new army public opinion is intimately concerned. It is of importance, therefore, that the public should not be misled into believing that the revolution wrought by the new weapon is purely mythical, that voluntary service has broken down, and that salvation is only to be found in an imitation of the tactics and organisation of armies that have no experience of modern war.

It is on this account that Graf Sternberg's book is chiefly welcome. It is something more than a lively record of military adventure. The author is an experienced soldier, who saw a great deal of South Africa, and quite enough of the campaign to give his opinions weight. His Dugald Dalgetty-like indifference as to which side he fought for,

so long as he did fight, is a strong proof of his impartiality ; and the delightful simplicity of his narrative makes it impossible to doubt its truthfulness. His ideas of English political morality may be passed by with a smile ; but his comments on both tactics and organisation are worth attention ; while his admiration of the British soldier, together with his ample recognition of the abnormal difficulties of the theatre of war, supply a wholesome corrective to the criticisms dealt with in the preceding pages.

It will be considered, I think, that the Translator has done well to keep close to the original. Nor will it detract from the reader's amusement that the Author's lapses into poetical description, the incidents of his voyage to Cape Town, and his *naïve* confessions of his catholic taste in liquor have been left untouched.

G. F. R. HENDERSON.

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MY EXPERIENCES

OF

THE BOER WAR

CHAPTER I

THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE TRANSVAAL IN 1896

(Communicated by the Author to the 'Neue Freie Presse' on his first visit to South Africa after the Jameson Raid)

THE year 1895 may be designated as the year of gold craze, although the mania was less prevalent in Austria than in England and France, or, more generally speaking, in the west of Europe.

The promised land of gold, with its countless millions, became the foster-mother of an army of idlers, who were now able to live, with very little trouble to themselves, in the lap of luxury.

Old Aunt Europa, whose wardrobe has been rummaged for centuries by millions of men, has only old clothes, far too well known, and the search for something new in her most secret cupboards has revealed nothing. This musty old quarter of the globe, already past the zenith of its prosperity, has long since ceased to reward in any generous fashion the energy and genius which men still expend upon it. It no longer affords full scope to the commercial pioneer in his eager, ambitious pursuit of gold. Yet this gold, which is the object of so much labour, the end which so many strive to reach, which acts as a panacea for weariness, as a spur to idleness; which is the source of all enjoyment, the lever of power, the cradle of art, the arbiter and ruler of the world—this gold, which is earned so hardly by the sweat of man's brow, by dint of self-sacrifice, privation, and by the life-blood of struggling humanity, has nevertheless a home, where each one may find it easily, provided he has secured a part and parcel of the land in which it lies.

The world has heard the story; the papers have confirmed it, and the world has eagerly jumped at the shares. The home of the gold, the cradle of the mighty god of our materialistic century, was bought for three hundred millions sterling; and thousands of mammon worshippers streamed as Crusaders to the modern Golgotha (*sic!*) to take possession of the sacred soil.

The idle, pleasure-seeking sons of civilisation welcomed in the discovery of the gold-fields an escape from all labour and future toil. The gold fever seized all classes, and reached its highest point when the most worthless shares were put up and bought for untold sums.

Only political complications could shake the unlimited hopes of the public, and they began with the ill-organised expedition of Dr. Jameson, which threatened the security of the mines. Then came a general feeling of mistrust, which till this day has not quite disappeared.

Shortly after the news of Dr. Jameson's incursion reached Vienna, I determined to

go to the Transvaal, to see with my own eyes that which had kept the world breathless for a year. It was more than possible, moreover, that I might see a little fighting, and this also attracted me. I left Vienna on January 19, and went *viâ* Southampton, by the s.s. 'Norman,' reaching Cape Town on February 4. There I met men from Johannesburg, prominent members of the Reform Committee, and also leaders of the little army which had been destroyed at the battle of Krugersdorp ; among them Captain Coventry, who was believed to be dead, but had recovered from his dangerous wound, and was contentedly sipping whisky-and-soda in the bar. As I had excellent letters of recommendation, I soon got to know the best society of the Colony. I had several confidential talks with the Colonial Secretary and Minister of the Interior, Mr. Te Water, at lunch and dinner. Among others staying at the Grand Hotel was Leonard, who, in the event of the revolution being successful, was to have become President of the Transvaal ; the rest were less well-known folk.

The general opinion in Cape Colony as to the revolution was that the English Government had no share in it. The man who is looked on here as at the bottom of the whole affair is Rhodes. Cecil Rhodes found his way as a poor consumptive devil to the Colony ten years before, to get cured in the Free State. He acquired, at the same time with health, a fortune of untold millions, and is considered here to be a modern Napoleon.

Without exception every one admires him, and he is one of the fortunate mortals to whom envy does no harm. Rhodes is depicted as an organising genius of the first water, who allows no scruple or consideration to stand between him and his object. He can do no wrong; everything good or useful which has been done in South Africa in the last few years is ascribed to him. His popularity, notwithstanding his recall home, is undamaged, and he remains 'the coming man' in the eyes of the colonists, hap what may. His openly expressed ideal, 'The independent States of South Africa,' marks the man he is.

He is a Separatist, and consequently a

very unpopular person with the Ministry in London, where he was refused an audience both by Rosebery and Salisbury. Rhodes is also director of the Chartered Company, which is so popular a company in England, and possesses such far-reaching influence, that the Government did not venture to remove the South African dictator.

His resignation in January of this year must therefore have been very welcome to the English Government.

Next to Rhodes comes Beit. While the former is prominent as a statesman and organiser, the latter achieved his successes on the Stock Exchange. Beit, who is partner in the firm of Beit and Eckstein, is the most prominent financial genius in the affairs of the Rand. Their total fortune is estimated at about thirty millions sterling. All the rest, Barnato included, are dwarfs alongside these giant capitalists and their party. The monopoly of the De Beers diamond mines is their work, the financing of the Chartered Company, and a third of the mine shares on the Rand belongs to them.

Rhodes and Beit had formed great plans for the Rand. It is said that they meant monopolising the gold industry, as they had done the diamond fields. To carry this out they had first to secure possession of the reins of government in the Transvaal, in order to turn the legislation to the service of the Chartered Company and its sister undertakings. This selfish design was adorned with a halo of patriotism, and the whole English nation identified itself with Dr. Jameson's freebooters, who were, perhaps, even themselves unconscious of the fact that they were risking their lives for the well-being of certain Chartered shareholders. The attempt failed pitiably. Beit may be a great financial strategist, but he is not a leader of men. Arms without soldiers will not win battles. Three thousand rifles and a number of Maxim guns slept the sleep of the just in Johannesburg, while six hundred men without supplies wandered about the desert.

A handful of Boers easily subdued the insurrection, which commenced with such ostentation. The drama in Johannesburg,

'Fighting Brokers,' is among the best burlesques which have ever been produced on the world's stage. Even the people in Johannesburg laugh over it.

To refer to the Reform Committee. Before I went to Johannesburg I had read so much about the Reform Committee that I was in a way impressed by it. How astonished I was as I made the acquaintance, one after another, of its members!

It should first be mentioned that the Committee consisted of seventy-five men, not Englishmen only, but, as a matter of fact, mainly Afrikanders—that is, men of European origin, but born in Africa. Every second person who had the slightest ambition belonged to the Reform Committee. The consequence was, that on the same day that any conclusion was arrived at, President Kruger knew of it. Johannesburg is a town in which most people acquire money with very little effort. It can be easily understood that in a place with so many rich people whose one aim in life was getting richer, and who, with all the will in the

world, could find nothing else to do, the inception of a political movement, in which every one would be able to distinguish himself, roused their ambition. They all wanted to be members of the Committee which was to plan the coming revolution. Those who were excluded from this honour became scoffers or traitors. This Committee, which first saw the light of day in the Rand Club, held daily sittings, and the flow of eloquence and the endless discussions prevented them arriving at any definite conclusions. Vanity and self-importance were the motive forces, and also the nails in the coffin of the Reform Committee. I, unfortunately, did not take part in the warlike drama in Johannesburg, and can only rely on the statements of eye-witnesses. These, moreover, were difficult to understand, as uncontrollable laughter at the mere recollection prevents them talking. When I reached Johannesburg the blood-thirsty warriors were back in their offices, and killing time on the Stock Exchange, where, however, no business was going on. Drowsy jobbers were dreaming in front of

empty banks, and only now and then was heard a sad, pitiful moan—'East Rand,' or 'Randfontein,' &c. No exchange, everything flat at steady rates.

I will not give any guide-book description of Johannesburg; too much has been written about it, both true and false. I limit myself to the political situation. At one time I tried to believe that the startling events in the Transvaal had been brought about by the greedy directors of the mining companies on the one hand, and on the other by the stockbrokers, who saw in them an excellent opportunity for a little outside business, which would increase their reputations and standing. I am now, however, convinced that the English Government had a hand in them, though it only took sides openly when public opinion forced it to do so.

The conflict in the Transvaal over the right of voting, the starting-point of the movement, must not be looked on in the same light as the foolish proceedings which followed. Whites, born in the Transvaal, owning property, paying taxes, &c., are

barred from the right of voting, and enjoy no more political rights than the Kaffir. The wealthy mining industry which Europe has founded there is, rightly or wrongly, entirely neglected by the Legislature, and not one single representative of this industry has either seat or vote. The Boers, lacking education, living in farms miles apart, remote from towns, without schools, are the law-givers of this country. They alone regulate the taxes and the Customs, and they heartily detest the interlopers who win the treasure from under their feet, and who raise the price of food and of wages, without any advantage to the burghers. Formerly the latter were the masters; now they have to bow before the omnipotence of wealth, education, and culture. Their language is a Dutch dialect, and all the State officials are imported Hollanders. These latter are distinguished by their extraordinary corruption, their ill-breeding, and their general laziness. For example, when I arrived at the Transvaal frontier station at 2 A.M., we were all penned up in the railway *coupés*, and forced to wait till 7 A.M., when the Customs officials

had finished their sleep. The examination of the baggage lasted three whole hours ; and then my trunks and servant were left behind, because the officials had unpacked all my kit, and let the train go off while they were still examining my things. A good example of the slackness of the officials, to which I can testify as an eye-witness, was a dynamite explosion, due to the fact that the officials had allowed six truck-loads of dynamite to remain forty-eight hours in the blazing sun.

That a radical reform was absolutely needed in the Transvaal every one who has been there will admit, but it does not follow that Rhodes, Werner, and Beit were the men who should carry it out. May God protect the Rand from that ! The Transvaal is the common property of many nations : it is international ground, which opens its arms to all comers, and will develop itself unfettered by traditions or past history.

An army of foreigners has settled down in Johannesburg during the last seven years —English, German, French, American, Malays, and Japanese. Wise and foolish,

honourable and degraded, idle and diligent, all mixed up together, as probably in no other place on the face of the earth. And this little world is urged and moved by one thought only—the lust for gold. National feelings find no place there; they are choked before they can breathe. Consequently, the Anglophile movement has found no adherents in Johannesburg, and the hatred of Germans, of which the papers talk, is a myth. Certain traits arouse antipathy there as elsewhere.

In the midst of this international peace the German Emperor's telegram fell like a bomb, spreading terror among those who opposed reform. The hatred of the foreigners for the Boer Government was extended to its allies, and thus much bitterness was excited against Germany. The Germans had to atone for that telegram. They were dismissed from their situations, all relations with them were broken off, and they saw their incomes disappearing. After a few weeks, however, the Rand forgot about it, for in the goldfields memory is short: no one thinks of anything beyond to-day.

Society in Johannesburg is wealthy,

generous, and uncultivated, composed of people who in 1889 did not possess a farthing —great children, vain, and mannerless. As to *meum* and *tuum*, the majority are somewhat vague, although very easy-going as to small sums. On one point they are together to a man, and that is when it is a matter of defrauding and robbing the European public.

The question which suggests itself to any one seeking to judge of present conditions is, What is to happen in the future? The answer can only be conjectural. One thing is certain, and that is that the present conditions are but temporary.

It will depend on the cleverness of President Kruger whether the question is solved peacefully or not. The Boers are arming themselves in feverish haste; they do not trust England—perhaps rightly; on the other hand, they over-estimate their own powers, and are arrant boasters. It looks as if the Transvaal would declare its independence. That would enable England, with all justice, to declare war. Public opinion in England, against which the Crown and the Ministry are powerless, is all for war; the

people want to wipe out Krugersdorp. Who can stop England? Germany does not find it worth while interfering in Bulgaria—how much less in the Transvaal! What advantages would Germany reap in the event of victory, and could she fight England? Never, and no! Germany has no interests in Cape Colony, and should not attempt to create any. England will annex the Transvaal because the English people desire it; and no one either will or can stop her. I do not say that it will happen in a fortnight, but it will come, for it is the Hanover of Africa, which runs into English territory just as Hanover cut into Prussia. Mashona and Matabeleland are worthless as long as the Transvaal has a tariff which makes import impossible, and so long as the Transvaal Government blocks everything which can further the development and prosperity of the Chartered Company.

If England annexes the Transvaal, no one need weep, least of all the shareholders. I discriminate between England and the Chartered Company, for they are two very different things. The consequence of an-

nexation would be the abolition of exorbitant duties, and the deliverance from claims which now press very heavily. The next result would be the solution of the 'nigger question.' The question is one of life and death for the mines, for without a fresh and abundant influx of blacks many companies must reduce their mining work or even stop altogether. The excessive wages are reducing the profits considerably even now, when only twenty per cent. of the mines are working; what would happen if all the mines were working? President Kruger recognises the danger, and has concluded a treaty with the Free State. The only result of this treaty will be that the Free State also will be annexed. If the Republics should be able to place 30,000 men in the field, which may be taken as about a maximum, then 150,000 well-led and well-armed English soldiers will amply suffice to carry the business through. The present condition resembles the lull before the storm, and sheet-lightning is already to be seen: presently it will thunder and lighten, and the goldfields will be drenched in blood.

CHAPTER II

MY DEPARTURE

On October 11 the Republic declared war against Great Britain. Months had passed in negotiations, and at last the great breach came. England had demanded that the Uitlanders should be given the right of voting after five years' residence, but the Transvaal Republic would only grant it after seven years.

The crisis had been brought about by the English demand. The course of the subsequent negotiations is too well known to need repetition here. I mention them merely to accentuate the fact that England's demand for the representation of the mining industry in the Volksraad was not the real reason for the declaration of war. The question at issue was the suzerainty; once this was ad-

mitted by the Transvaal, annexation was to have followed.[1]

The celebrated Raid opened the eyes of the Boer politicians—or rather, not so much the Raid itself, which was childish, but the position taken up by the English Government, and still more by English public opinion, with regard to it.

At that time I travelled to South Africa *viâ* England, and had the opportunity of talking with many influential people both in London and Cape Town. In London they considered that the honour of the British flag had been violated, and this, in whatever light Dr. Jameson's expedition was looked upon, roused a strong feeling against the Boers. There were not wanting authoritative voices to condemn the Raid, but the Englishman, logical and just as a rule, ceases to be so directly his national vanity is touched.

[1] It has not been thought worth while to correct these and many other amusing statements. It may be remarked, however, that the writer's credulity wherever English policy is concerned is of the usual Continental type.—ED.

Then came the telegram of the German Emperor, and the position taken up by the Continental press ; and these had far greater effect than Jameson's disaster.

It was clear that Great Britain was condemned by public opinion on the Continent —that she was politically isolated. This was felt by the British all the world over, and it excited a deep hatred of the German Emperor and his nation, for they had hitherto been looked upon as faithful allies. It is now evident that the celebrated telegram to Kruger prevented war at the time of the Raid ; and the question naturally arises whether, if the German Emperor had again taken up the same position, the present war would have been prevented.

Kruger, the wily old politician, took it into his head that the crisis was merely postponed, and made his preparations, secretly and cunningly, for resistance.

It is a riddle to me how these great consignments of arms and ammunition, which came to a great extent from England itself, and from well-known factories, could be sup-

plied, and carried on English ships, without attracting the attention of the English authorities. Three millions were spent on fortifications, and every preparation made for war. It is said that the English commander-in-chief in South Africa sent exhaustive reports to his Government. The question arises as to what steps might have been taken at that time by the English Government, and whether thereby subsequent bloodshed might not have been averted.

The war began really in 1896, for after the Jameson Raid, such was the mistrust of the Boers, that they looked on any concession to the Reformers as treason to their country. Up to that moment a considerable party in the Transvaal, with Joubert at their head, had been inclined towards reform ; but from the Raid onward passionate hatred of the foreigner stifled any rational proposal, and the Boers were roused not only against England, but against the whole civilised world. Certain foreigners, thinking it better business to keep in with the Government,

threw in their lot with it, for commercial reasons, contrary to the dictates of their consciences. I had opportunities of talking with these people, and know what their real views were.

There can be no doubt that England was long-suffering; and that, as far as this war is concerned, she was justified in the eyes of God and man. The Boers base their arguments on the right of the landlord to do what he likes in his own house. The foreigner is a lawless stranger. *Their* laws are the unalterable precepts of Calvin, founded on the Psalms of Holy Writ, and all other views are heretical.

I cannot deny that the Boers are a very religious people, and in many ways I admire and respect them. They remind us of Cromwell's Puritans, and of the Dutch Protestants under William of Orange. But history teaches us, I believe, that even the English felt so uncomfortable under the *régime* of the former that they recalled Charles II. amid universal jubilation. Puritanism is excellent for the individuals who

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choose to submit to it, but as a State religion it is a failure.

As may well be imagined, the goldfields, where the ne'er-do-well, the tramp, the failure, the gold-seeker, men of all sorts and conditions, come to seek their fortune, are quite unsuited for puritanical legislation. Apart from that, the Boer Government had reached the zenith of incapacity; in this respect it was the worst government in the world, and I, an Austrian, say it. But in spite of his severe puritanism, the Boer at heart has a thorough appreciation of the advantages of riches. While Kruger and his grandsons conversed with the farmers in the language of the Psalms, they did not fail to set a very proper value on things temporal. Corruption battened in Pretoria as nowhere else in the world. I will admit, however, that being so close to Johannesburg it would have been the eleventh wonder of the world had it been otherwise.

The main characteristic of the Boer policy was its pettiness, the consequence of their limited horizon, their want of know-

ledge of the world, and their unlimited self esteem. To a Boer Kruger represented the brains of the world. In addition to this, the still living memory of 1881 gave them a contempt for England; while their trust in God and the good marksmanship of their rifles was not to be shaken. Only thus is the fact to be explained that this small nation should so cheerfully enter upon a war with a Power like England.

From what I heard, I should say that events caused no excitement. The Transvaalers, accustomed to fight against natives, welcomed the war: for them it was more sport than anything; while the Free Staters hesitatingly agreed. A sense of duty decided the majority.

After war was declared I went to London with the intention of joining the English. I learnt, however, from the authorities, that there was no opening for foreigners. I stayed there some days, and talked with many of the public men. The generally expressed view was that the war would be over by Christmas. Buller and his army corps left England with

a great flourish of trumpets. I dined the same evening with a friend of mine, Count Seilern, in the country, and met a niece of Buller's at dinner. When I gave my view, that at least 150,000 men would be necessary to bring the war to a successful issue, I became the laughing-stock of the party. The people in the City were wild with excitement; they saw colossal dividends tumbling into their pockets, acquired by the blood of brave English soldiers. England rejoiced; at last Majuba and Krugersdorp would be avenged. At last Johannesburg would become English, and then the stream of gold would flow from that city, where most of it was sticking, into London. I, who boldly expressed my intention of going to the Transvaal to join the Boers, was an object of ridicule and of pity.

I went from London to Dr. Leyds at Brussels. He received me coldly and formally. A handsome, serious man, speaking all languages with exceptional facility. I communicated my desire for a commission in the Boer army, and handed him testimonials of the most flattering description. He replied

that it was impossible, as the Boers only obey their own leaders, but he would recommend me as a newspaper correspondent. I accepted this, and received a pass from him. We talked over the chances of the Boers, and he appeared quite confident, relying mainly on the inevitable European intervention.

He looked on the annexation of the Republics as a question of universal politics. I am of the same opinion, though the action of the Continental cabinets has not borne it out. It is marvellous how casually the Continent treats questions outside Europe, and the importance it assigns to the most trifling incidents on the Continent. Is this due to ignorance of the world on the part of the statesmen and the Press? Anyhow, the ideas of England on this head are quite different.

Leyds is cautious and retiring, and a man of few words. I am afraid his diplomatic relations were not sufficiently far-reaching to enable him to give a correct insight of the situation to the Republics. Of course, this is only conjecture.

From Brussels I went to Paris. Opinion

there was divided. Paris has two faces ; one is French, and the other smiles on the capitalists. The people one meets in the great world think more of the gold shares in their safes than of anything else. Moreover, no one had the smallest doubt but that the whole war would be merely a simple march to Pretoria. Very significant was my conversation with M. Jules Borges, who advised me in a friendly way not to tell any one I was going to join the Boers, as the war would be over long before I arrived. In vain I sought to convince him that with so small a force England would have no chance. Jules Borges was one of the first men who went to South Africa, and one of the few who knows the Republics thoroughly.

'Believe me,' he said, 'the Boers will scatter as quickly as they have come together.'

His was the view of the Ministry, the Press, and of the shareholders. That it was so is no wonder, for it has never happened that a rude people like the Boers has been able to offer resistance to soldiers armed,

trained, and supplied like the English.[1] Then came the news of the great victory at Glencoe. Naturally, they asked how it could be otherwise. There was only one opinion in Paris, and that was that the war was already over.

From Paris I went, *viâ* Vienna, to Constantinople. In Vienna I had the pleasure of winning a race an hour before I started. On October 26 I arrived at Constantinople, and stayed there three days. I had glorious weather and bright sunshine on the Bosphorus. I went out as far as the Black Sea and inhaled the breeze off the laughing blue waves. On the 29th I went, *viâ* Smyrna and Athens, to Cairo.

Here I stayed till November 12.

I made the acquaintance of many officers, including Lord Kitchener. One cannot help being struck by his imposing presence. He has a Bismarckian head, with a lion's mane, and one cannot deny that he has manly

[1] The writer's memories of parallels in military history appear to be somewhat at fault. He has apparently forgotten even the defence of the Tyrol and the Bosnian campaign.—ED.

beauty. He is by no means popular. His stern manner and his severity do not command the sympathy of the English army. He is a remarkable man, very brusque, and not fond of society. He generally takes his meals solemnly with his two A.D.C.s. People talked a good deal of the war. Major B——, a very pleasant and cultivated man, was particularly friendly to me. For this I have to thank the circumstance that I had made the journey from Constantinople with his young wife. Meanwhile, the catastrophe at Ladysmith had already happened, and the soldiers based all their hopes on Buller. Once this great man appears, they said, the war will soon be over. They also expected a great deal from the naval guns and the lyddite.

My determination to join the Boers was regretted, and the conviction was general that before my arrival the whole thing would be finished.

CHAPTER III[1]

FROM CAIRO TO PRETORIA

AT 11 A.M. on November 12 I left Cairo for Port Said. The sun was pitiless, pouring down his rays like a golden waterfall on the grey waters of the Nile, on the fruitful fields, and on the great town, with its streets, in spite of the heat, full of busy life. I got into the train, which was full of people—several English officers, coolies, functionaries, and two Turkish women. I stopped in the neighbourhood of the latter, and, climbing into the next coupé, which was connected by a gangway with the compartment they occupied, attempted, in all simplicity, to approach them. My efforts, however, were greeted with base ingratitude, and the old one poured on me a torrent of what was probably coarse Arabic abuse.

[1] Were it not for the very naïve ideas of Eastern life and habits, this chapter might well be skipped.—ED.

This was enough. I withdrew and remained solitary in my compartment.

The heat abated as the evening came on. On the right lay an uncultivated and gently undulating tract of reddish sand, and in the distance could be seen the laden camels, pacing like automata across the desert. Peculiar animals,—they go along in their resigned, patient way, one after another, nostrils inflated, always at the same pace—the ships of the desert.

When a caravan breaks in on the everlasting monotony, and pursues its melancholy way, the swaying Arab sitting aloft, an extraordinary charm steals imperceptibly over the senses. It animates the desert and produces an effect which touches the imagination, being the one living thing which forms the link connecting it with humanity. And through the midst of it the train rolled on to the sea. The sun sank slowly over the horizon, and twilight came down on the great sleepy world. The yellow waters of the Nile pervade the country like a sea, and on it fell the purple glow of the setting sun,

colouring it with all the shades of the spectrum. It was a heavenly sight. Darkness was covering the earth, and the crescent-shaped moon was rising as I reached Port Said.

On November 13, soon after breakfast, I went on board the 'König,' which had arrived in the early morning. She is a medium-sized ship, with only one funnel, but I boarded her with pleasurable anticipation. One enters, as it were, into a small unknown world, where all are strangers, with whom one must live for a certain number of weeks in close proximity.

My first question was as to the mail, which brought me a number of welcome letters. A turn round the deck gave me an opportunity of observing my fellow passengers. There were many people travelling to the war, not only for fighting purposes, but also on missions of Christian charity.

At last, at 3 o'clock, the 'König' uttered a warning cry, and having taken a deep breath began slowly to move. The ship's

crew sang 'Heil Dir im Siegeskranz,' and forth we went into the far unknown. Tears filled my eyes, and my heart bade a last farewell to all my dear ones. I was going into the midst of war's dangers and an unhealthy climate. Such momentary weaknesses soon pass, and give way to cheerful thoughts, which wipe away all traces of childishness. The cheery laugh is the sign of the true soldier. One should be lighthearted, and only occasionally give way to sad thoughts.

The people on board the 'König' who were bound for the war were of the cheeriest —German, Dutch, French, and even English soldiers; surgeons from Germany, Holland, and Sweden; nuns from Portugal and France; Red Cross sisters from Holland and Germany.

Besides these there were the Governor of Beira, Señor de Meyrelles de Canto de Castro, with his wife and two charming daughters, and some other Portuguese who held appointments at Beira. While the minds of all the others were full of war, the

Meyrelles family were undisturbed. And all the poetry of the 'König' wove itself round the delightful little daughters, like ivy round tender rosebushes.

I made friends on the first day with Baron Reitzenstein, a major of the German general staff and a real cavalryman. He finished second in the distance ride from Vienna to Berlin. A French cavalry officer, a Captain Gallopeau, who had made a campaign in the Soudan and another in Madagascar, made up our trio. The German element on board, with the exception of two Herr von Gordons, who were going on an expedition into German East Africa, were constant to the beer cask. The ship's doctor in particular, who was so round you could have played skittles with him, consumed so much that after a week the draught beer was finished, and there was only bottled beer to be had. This also was taken to very kindly. I, personally, never drink beer, so was undisturbed by what was for others a matter of vast importance.

The first three days, through the Suez

Canal and in the Red Sea, passed peacefully.

On the right one saw, quite close, the beautiful African coast-line—a long indented ridge. Equally near, on the other side, were the mountains of Sinai—rugged, bare, and gigantic, rising high into the heavens.

The atmospheric effects on both shores of this part of the Red Sea at sunrise and sunset were splendid. The beauty and intensity of the colouring, the clouds tinged with purple and crimson, the blue sky, the dark, lazy, shimmering ocean, into whose depths the sunset colours dip, form a glorious sight, never to be forgotten.

On the third day Neptune's forehead began to wrinkle and his face grew angry. The good ship 'König' rode on proudly, but at last she began to toss about. Our two Portuguese maidens began to be sorry for themselves, and their cheery laughter died away in suspicious sighs. The elder, who was about twenty years of age, Marie Louise, or Mimi, was the first to suffer, and she cried out repeatedly through the day:

'O Mama, O Mama, sto tao isvada,' which means 'O Mamma, I am so seasick.' The younger, sixteen years old, suffered silently. She was so small that we named her 'Pequenina.' She was pretty and clever, and talked charmingly. The mother, who was a very distinguished-looking lady, with beautiful manners and plenty of brains, suffered also, but she knew how to conceal it.

The tossing lasted until we arrived at Aden on the 19th. The 'König' stayed here from noon till about four o'clock in the afternoon. I went on shore to make a few purchases, and soon returned on board. Every one knows Aden nowadays, so I will not give a description of the place.

After we had passed Cape Gardafui the sea quieted down, and we steamed along, through what looked like thick blue ink, for six days to Tanga.

There I went on shore with the Governor's family. Tanga is quite a new town, with a few clean-looking houses and beautiful vegetation. Here we saw and plucked the first flowers. Under the great avenues

of palms to the right and left were rhododendrons, wallflowers, beautiful convolvuli, and mallows of every colour. Many other plants and shrubs, unknown to me, were covered with blossoms, and the little Portuguese girl gathered great bouquets, which, of course, I had to carry. Pequenina called herself the sister of the flowers.

A comical incident occurred in the middle of this amusement. Marie Louise (or Mimi) wanted to jump over a little hedge to pick a beautiful flower. She took a short run, and fell her whole length in a thorn bush. She did not know whether to laugh or cry, but eventually decided for the latter. After a long walk through the hot streets of Tanga we went back to the ship. Tanga is unhealthy ; the fever there has done for many a promising young man.

We left Tanga the evening of November 25, and arrived next day at Zanzibar.

This island may be called the Paradise of East Africa. It is a beautiful garden, in the middle of which is the town of Zanzibar, and rising out of it is the new palace

of the Sultan. The English guns destroyed the old palace. One can still see the mast of the one warship of the Sultan sticking out of the water in the harbour, where it was sunk by the English. It looks as if it remained as a constant warning for the new Sultan.

We went on shore with the Governor's family, and made a short excursion into the interior. It was like fairyland. This huge garden is full of palms, shrubs, flowers, and peopled with black goats shining like patent boots, and brown ones with clever, supercilious faces ; oxen and cows with great humps, and another sort of cow, which is hardly to be distinguished from a donkey. Horses, mules, and donkeys rove about as they please. You see here men of every nationality living alongside one another—Indians, Somalis, Kaffirs, Zulus, natives, and the ruling class, the Arabs. The whites here also belong to all nations, but although the island is English, the Germans predominate. We drove some miles out, and about halfway we came on a slave-market. In front of a house squatted perhaps a hundred

negroes—slaves—who were for sale. This was the first time in my life I had seen slaves.

Zanzibar enjoys this speciality, and the English permit it, which is remarkable, as they have always and everywhere fought most vigorously against slavery; and they give the blacks in their colonies the same rights as their own countrymen.

I did not, however, bother much about the slaves, but drove quietly on, admiring the island and the vegetation in which the native huts are embedded.

Civilisation has made no mark on the negroes. They have preserved their traditions, their customs, and their manners. They dwell in huts and villages which might have been built a thousand years ago, and do not rise above the level of animals.

Perhaps one expects too much. It is only thirty years ago that Europe first cast her eye on East Africa, if we except the Portuguese attempts at colonisation in Mozambique; and these latter can hardly be called vigorous.

Zanzibar, like all places in the neighbourhood of the Equator, enjoys a good share of the sun's rays, and we hailed the approach of night with sincere satisfaction. On our return journey we met the Sultan out driving. He had two mounted men in front, and two cyclists behind as escort. He himself, with his flowing white beard, was driving his turn-out. Our coachman and the dragoman on the box, beating their breasts with their hands, gave vent to loud exclamations as the lord and ruler drove by. The two cyclists as gentlemen in attendance looked particularly funny in these wild surroundings, and quite the proper escort for a nigger king.

We arrived on board the 'König' late in the evening, worn out with fatigue.

We sailed the same night for Dar-es-Salaam, the chief town of German East Africa. There is not much to be said about it. The Germans have done far too much for this unhealthy spot. There are hospitals, big Government and other buildings, but no railway to the interior, which is the most important work of all in a colony. The

French have done the same in Madagascar. They have spent 500 million francs on the war, any amount on the harbour, Government buildings, &c., and they keep a lot of troops there, but have not built one kilometre of railway. How differently the English set to work!

Their railways run from the Cape to Beira, from Cairo to Khartum, from Mombassa to the Victoria Nyanza—thousands and thousands of kilometres. The same day, November 28, we left Dar-es-Salaam, and arrived at Mozambique on the 30th.

The English Consul, who had returned by the 'König' after a year's leave in London, invited me and a Captain A——, who was on his way from India to Durban to join his regiment, to dine with him on shore. Poor Consul B—— found his home in Mozambique in the greatest disorder. The acting-consul had eaten all his pigeons and chickens, allowed his silver to get tarnished, broken his lamps, and let his furniture be spoiled by badly-trained dogs. What annoyed B—— most of all was the broken musical-

box. A—— and I left the two consuls alone, and went for a walk till dinner. We visited the telegraph office, and the official asked us in to have a whisky and soda. He had only been married six months, and his wife was delighted to see English people again. This official knew two friends of mine, Count B—— and Count Hans C——. I discovered, while there, that Captain A—— was a brother-in-law of F——, a secretary at our English embassy. All four of us then went over the ancient Portuguese fort, which has been standing since the fifteenth century. It is built entirely of coral, and its construction is interesting.

Mozambique is a long way the oldest colony on the East Coast: its history dates back to the Middle Ages. The town, which is very pretty and clean, is to-day the seat of the Governor-General of the Portuguese possessions in East Africa.

After I had gathered some blossoms from the flowering shrubs for Pequenina, we went back to B—— to have dinner. The feud

between the new and the old consul raged worse than ever, and even dinner did not stop it. We had but little time, as the 'König' was to start at 8 o'clock sharp, and we only began dinner at 7 o'clock.

Nevertheless, we got to the ship in good time. She had already uttered some warning signals. We had hardly left Mozambique when a delightful breeze sprang up. The sea began to get a little lively, and towards morning great waves were breaking over the deck. Our two singing birds were ill again. Full of pity, I gave them a remedy for sea-sickness which I had purchased in Cairo. It did some good, but not much. Every fresh shock drove the poor children to despair. Less than half the passengers turned up for meals, and of these some had to quit the field of battle before they had finished. My remedy for sea-sickness met with a curious fate. After 11 o'clock, when the bar was closed and nothing more could be got to drink, the ship's doctor and some of his friends seized on the remedy for sea-sickness and drank it as alcohol. Reitzenstein,

the Governor, and I celebrated our approaching separation in champagne. The old Portuguese, a splendid fellow, sang 'Behüt' Dich Gott, es wär so schön gewesen' and 'Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten.' He knew no more German, though the girls both understood and spoke German well, so conversation was always carried on in French. At last we reached Beira, on December 1. The retiring Governor, with a crowd of people, ladies and gentlemen, came on board the 'König' to receive his successor. The latter had put on a frock coat and white spats for the ceremony, and a full hour before our arrival had assumed an official pose. The whole official world of Beira came on board, including the English director of the Mozambique Company, a man who had invaded the Transvaal with Jameson, and a crowd of ladies, who chattered without ceasing.

Finally, they all went on shore in numerous gaily-bedecked boats, while salutes were fired from the guns and rockets. This day, which was very hot, we stayed on

board. The next day, Pequenina's birthday, Reitzenstein and I went to pay our respects to the Governor.

The Government buildings are some distance away, and the streets consist of deep sand. There are rails laid along them everywhere, and little carriages manned by niggers run hither and thither, but they are all private, and strangers cannot get hold of them.

There was nothing for us to do but walk it.

We at last reached the new home of the Meyrelles family, and offered our congratulations. Little Pequenina was somewhat sad. The parents apologised for being unable to invite us to dine, but they were themselves the guests of the former Governor.

We bade them a touching farewell and returned to the ship. The next day the ex-Governor and his wife embarked on our ship. Again the same crowd of people appeared to bid farewell to the late Governor who had welcomed the new one. The whole

Meyrelles family came too. Only when the 'König' had emitted her third groan did the visitors quit the ship. The 'König' immediately got under weigh. Two unknown ladies were left on board, and stood looking helpless. The captain refused to stop again, and so these two ladies had to go to Lorenzo Marques. As the ship left the harbour they tried to get them on board the pilot boat, but the sea was so rough that it was impossible, and they had to remain on board. I did not see them again.

The last two days of our voyage we had a rough sea, and there was bare opportunity for all our farewell celebrations. The news from the seat of war was very contradictory. Boer sympathisers announced crushing defeats of the English, and the latter, while admitting heavy losses, claimed victories everywhere. Rumours of the battles of Belmont and Modder River had reached Beira. It was only on reaching Lorenzo Marques that we learned the whole truth.

On the 6th, about 4 P.M., the 'König' reached Lorenzo Marques, and soon after-

wards I went on shore with three English officers to feed. It was real happiness setting foot on dry land once more, and in a lovely spot like Delagoa Bay, which is even more picturesque than Zanzibar. The rocks are red, the green foliage is sombre, and the richest tropical vegetation is seen on every side. We walked to the hotel, a fairly long stretch. The crickets were chirping like a full and melodious string band, and a sort of thrush sang lustily. The sun was sinking in peace, a gentle breeze tempered the hot air, and I felt, at the end of my journey, almost like a new-born babe. From the hotel we had a lovely view over the whole bay and the big harbour, thick with masts; English men-of-war, one Portuguese—the only one, I believe, which this country possesses—a French one, and the proud 'König' with her hundreds of lights, and a crowd of cargo boats. They lay there at rest on the dark blue ocean, perfectly still. And over them all the rising moon poured its silvery and mysterious light. An Italian band, three strong, was playing on the terrace.

Like a dream of long ago, the melodies swelled in my heart. Really good extra dry Pommery on my tongue, 'Martha,' 'Norma,' 'Funicula' in my ear, it was a delightful moment of my life.

The next day, December 7, all, except the English, started in two special trains for Pretoria. I remained behind, not caring to go in these crowded trains, and followed by the ordinary train at 8 next morning. The 'König' was now empty. The laughing, singing, drinking warriors had gone. My parting with the captain of the 'König,' Doherr, was quite affecting, and with reason: he was one of the most amiable, tactful men imaginable.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRANSVAAL DURING THE WAR

AT 7 A.M. on December 8 I left Lorenzo Marques. The first part of the journey is through Portuguese territory, very fertile and occupied by hard-working Kaffirs, all employed in agriculture. They live in congregations of typical straw huts, forming small villages, embedded in the rich green vegetation. About mid-day I arrived at the Transvaal frontier. From this time forth my lot was with the Boers. The field cornet at Komatiport, the frontier station—a big, fine peasant in uniform—demanded my passport, and, after he had inspected it, allowed me and my baggage through. Round about were several armed Boers, the only sign of a state of war amid the peaceful

surroundings. After a short halt the train proceeded. From here onward rise high mountains, which are covered with green grass to the very summits, and, increasing in height as one advances, become more and more wild in their appearance. The railway winds through the valley of the Crocodile River. The trains do not lay to heart the American maxim that 'time is money.' The temperature was all that could be desired. There was a great thunderstorm going on in the heavens, and from time to time a cloud would empty itself over us. After each heavy downpour of rain we saw the red mountain streams rushing wildly down to the romantic river below, fringed with palms, ferns and bushes, which swept along over enormous rocks. There are crocodiles and hippopotami in this neighbourhood, the latter being spared to save them from extermination.

At 8 P.M. we reached Watervalonder. The train pulled up, and we all got out to spend the night there. The Watervalonder Hotel is a clean little house kept by a homely Frenchman, who entertained us with

wonderful hunting stories. Here I first learnt that the sale of alcoholic drinks is prohibited by law throughout the country. It was a hard blow. Fortunately, I had my whisky flask with me, and, after much persuasion, managed to get a bottle of beer, which to me, who never as a rule take this liquor, tasted excellent. I also learnt more details as to the number of English prisoners taken and their casualties, and the very small losses which had been suffered by the Boers. About 9 o'clock the storm burst, and a regular deluge came down.

I went to bed, dead tired, so as to be up in good time on the 9th to get into the train and resume my journey to Pretoria. The country was exactly like that I had passed through the previous afternoon, and the weather was cool and pleasant. It rained almost continuously. About noon an armed Boer got into my compartment. He had fought at Ladysmith and Dundee, and was making his way back to rejoin at Colenso. He was the first eyewitness of the fighting I had met, and I listened to his accounts

with the greatest interest. He spoke German fluently, and one could rely absolutely on what he said, for he was most moderate in his views. The bursting of the first shell close by him had made an indelible impression on him, and he said that at that time the Boers found the hostile artillery fire very trying to stand. Since then, however, they have got quite used to it. The victories of the English at Belmont, Graspan, and Modder River were confirmed by him. 2,000 prisoners were at that time at Pretoria, and there were 1,500 more arriving soon, taken at Scholtz Nek and Colenso.

At 8 in the evening the train at last reached Pretoria. There were a lot of inquisitive people on the platform, who stared in at us. Our passports were again inspected, and then at last we were allowed to leave the train. I went to the Grand Hotel, and, choked with dust, went straight for a bath. In the evening, after a real good dinner, I went in search of the Red Cross doctors. After much wandering about I found them in the German club at a 'beer party,' which I

joined. There was a long German table, on which were numerous bottles of German beer, and German songs were sung to piano accompaniment. The entertainment was similar to a students' drinking bout. The chairman, a Baron Dewitz, a tall, lean, evil-looking man, spoke first, toasting the guests of the Red Cross; then the German Consul, a short, stout man, named Biermann, got on his legs. He spoke in a lifeless, hesitating way, and what he said was not, in my opinion, consistent with his official position, considering that the Kaiser was observing the strictest neutrality. The evening passed like all such evenings, and at midnight we went home. I slept once more in a clean, comfortable bed.

Next day, Sunday, the 10th, I was able to enjoy a well-earned rest. I commenced writing this book, and despatched several home letters. I could do nothing before 11 o'clock, and then I began by visiting Reitz, the Secretary of State, to whom I had letters of recommendation from Dr. Leyds. I met by chance on the steps of the hotel an

old Johannesburg acquaintance, whom I had met subsequently at Buda Pesth, and who now offered to help me. He took me to Reitz, with whom he was very friendly. When I entered the Government offices I found there was great excitement. Despatches had been received from General Cronje, which stated that a very bloody fight had been raging since dawn, and that the English had been beaten back three times already, with heavy loss. This was the battle of Scholtz Nek. The Secretary of State received me most politely, but refused to give me any assistance in getting to the frontier. Some discharged foreign officers had arrived about a fortnight before me, and had thoroughly drained the Government, so that the somewhat simple and naïve Secretary of State 'couldn't bear the smell,' as they say in Berlin, of any more such strangers of the same sort. As Reitz for the moment was very busy, he asked me to spend the evening with him. We then quitted the Government buildings. Mr. Spence, my *impresario*, invited me to breakfast, where I met a Dr. Krause, town com-

mandant of Johannesburg, and the Under-Secretary, Piet Groebler. The same evening I paid my visit to Mr. Reitz, and talked with him for three hours. Unfortunately, our conversation was interrupted by the entrance of the Portuguese Consul, and afterwards by two American reporters.

Reitz had no doubt as to the final victory of the Boers, of which he was so convinced that he would not even allow the possibility of the fortunes of war changing. At 11 o'clock I left this very busy man, who from morn till eve wrote permits for every conceivable action. Here, where I am now writing these lines, everything is forbidden. You cannot drink without permission of the Secretary of State ; you cannot go out after 9 P.M. ; you can only stop in the town so long as you possess a permit. And all these permits Reitz makes out with his own hands.

On December 12 I commenced to get together my campaigning equipment. It was a difficult job, as everything necessary was sold out. Thus it was that I had to stop several days in Pretoria, without, how-

ever, missing a battle, for I could not anyway have been at Scholtz Nek. As all the German officers and combatants had gone to Ladysmith, and as, in my own opinion, the decisive action must take place in the south, near the Modder River, I determined to go there. I remained quiet the following days, writing these lines, and getting to know the country and the people.

On the 19th I went to Johannesburg, where I was met at the station and conducted round by an Austrian, the President of the Austro-Hungarian Co-operative Defence Union. In Johannesburg one realised at every step that we were in a state of war. Almost all the shops were shut—the windows boarded—and deserted. The streets were empty, and only occasionally did one meet a soul. The alcoholic prohibition was enforced here remorselessly, which could hardly be said of the capital.

The same day, while in the private bar of the Pretoria Hotel, compensating myself for my abstemiousness in Johannesburg, I made the acquaintance of Dressler, one of the

staff of the 'Volksstem,' the principal newspaper of the town. I did not know what his business was, but as he had just come from the front, and had been at the battles at Dundee and Ladysmith, it interested me to listen to him.

Dressler was a Dutchman of good family, who had come out here on account of domestic quarrels, and had been doing war correspondent round Ladysmith, while his brother was editor of the 'Volksstem.' His accounts of the events at the front were most interesting. He informed me that the outbreak of war caused great enthusiasm throughout the country. The Boers had no doubt as to their ultimate success. They assembled in commandos, and went off to the front to the strains of the national hymn. They were not all equally confident, however ; there were evil prophets, particularly among those who had been in Europe and those who had interests in the mines. From the beginning, also, there was a peace party among them, of which the majority preferred to keep their views to themselves, as it was

not advisable to be looked on as an Uitlander. Once the war had started, every one had to take part in the conflict, whether he was willing to do so or not.

In order to understand how their mobilisation came to be so rapid, it is necessary first to explain the national organisation. The Boer army is a territorial Landsturm, the officers being selected during peace time. Joubert acted as commander-in-chief. He did not enjoy the full confidence of his countrymen, for the reason, perhaps, that when member of the Executive Council he had voted against all war equipments, and especially against the establishment and increase of the artillery, a proceeding which hardly was compatible with his functions as generalissimo. Joubert, however, was Kruger's political rival for the presidency, and so had to vote for black if Kruger moved for white. Joubert advocated an understanding with England, while Kruger, since 1896, had gone straight for war. He did not act thus out of a love for fighting, but because the slim Oom Paul knew that the

preservation of the *status quo* was only to be arrived at by force of arms.

Besides Joubert, the only man who held the title of General in peace was Cronje. The former possessed a regular uniform; the rank of the latter was only known by his wearing an ostrich feather in his hat.

All steps for the mobilisation of the Boer army were taken during the crisis. Every town and every district elected its officers. 'Hoofdlager Kommandant' was the highest appointment, corresponding to our corps commander. Then came general, commandant (major), field cornet, and corporal. Besides these there were also 'lager commandants,' who may be said to be a blend of supply officer and auditor. Once appointed, they could never leave the camp. They were under the 'Kommissarius' (commissary), who was responsible for the reserve of provisions, and who stopped sometimes in the camp, at others in the town, where he recruited horses and purchased food.

The forces of the two Republics possessed the same organisation, but were quite distinct.

As the military capabilities of individuals were unknown before the war, the election of officers depended on social position, wealth, and tradition. The names Cronje, Botha, and especially Pretorius, were represented in all ranks, as being descendants of well-known men who had distinguished themselves in previous wars. The Transvaal forces were originally divided into two, later into three armies—Joubert with the main army in Natal, Cronje at Mafeking. Later Cronje went to Kimberley, and General Schneeman remained behind at Mafeking. The troops of the Free State were originally divided into two armies, the one under Prinsloo at Kimberley, and the other in Natal under Cronje (who was no relation of the celebrated Cronje). Later there was the Colesberg army under Delarey, who had previously commanded at Modder River, and a weak detachment at Stormberg.

The total number of troops under arms barely exceeded 35,000 men:—in Natal, 15,000 men; at Modder River, 11,000; Colesberg, 7,000 men; Mafeking, 1,000 to

1,500; at Stormberg, 1,500 men. These were the numbers which should have been present, but owing to the numerous furloughs they were never reached.[1] The two Republics possessed 40,000 Mauser rifles,[2] and perhaps 15,000 Henry-Martinis, Mannlicher single-loaders, and, in addition, sporting rifles of old patterns.

The Transvaal artillery consisted of forty-five guns of different patterns—four big fortress guns, French Creusot field guns, Krupp quick-firing guns, Nordenfeldt-Maxim and Maxim guns.

The Free State possessed eighteen guns, but only a few of modern construction—many were even muzzle-loaders. While the Transvaal had only Boer officers and men, the Free State artillery consisted chiefly of foreigners. The uniform of the Transvaal artillery (the only arm which had a uniform) was something between the French and our own. Although the officers wore smart uniforms, their bearing was anything but military.

[1] These numbers do not include the colonial rebels.—ED.

[2] The author has been evidently misled by the Boers as to the number of both rifles and field guns.—ED.

As a study of the different types of guns, this war was very instructive. The English Armstrong guns proved of little value, and the Creusot guns had the longest range. It is possible, however, that they are too heavy for field guns. The Krupps, model 95, proved most serviceable, and their fire effect was next best to the French guns. In the Transvaal very long range guns were not required, as the small target offered by well-covered troops excluded all precision. The Nordenfeldts, which could fire twenty-four 5-centimetre shells in a minute at a range of 6,600 yards, did the best service—self-loading, no recoil, with water-cased barrel, light, and fixed ammunition on bands. The Vickers-Maxim were no good, as the barrel became hot immediately.

As far as rifles are concerned the Mauser rifle takes the first place ; it proved excellent. A small improvement of the magazine, as has been done with the Lee-Metfords, would make the Mauser rifle perfect. There were not many Austrian Mannlichers ; they were not approved of by the Boers, because the

mechanism too often refused to act. Its magazine also is unpractical and out of date. The calibre, for a small bore, is too large, and consequently the cartridges are too heavy.

All these modern weapons will only too soon have to be discarded, alas! unless changes in the laws of war are brought about by some sort of a convention. The small-bore rifle with steel-cased bullet but rarely disables a man. Unless a man is shot through the heart, the brain, or a main artery, he does not die, but is fighting again, quite recovered, after four weeks. The Black Watch regiment showed this. The magazine rifle has proved to be more of a danger than an advantage, and it is very doubtful whether it would not be better to go back to the single-loader. No troops can learn fire discipline in peace time, for it is more a matter of nerve than anything else.

The Boers managed wonderfully well in the matter of ammunition supply, for, theoretically, there was no sort of organisation. The reason why they never suffered from want of ammunition was that every man carried

300 cartridges on him, and also because they never shot at random, but only when they saw their target, and because they took careful aim. Another explanation is that the Boers never changed their position, once they had occupied it, whatever might happen. Behind the cover they held, large stores of ammunition were stacked.

According to the ideas of a European soldier, the discipline of the Boer army was lamentable, but to any one who got an insight into the life of the people, as I subsequently had an opportunity of doing, it was wonderful. A Boer general must not be looked on in the light of an all-powerful commandant. He is only a commandant of a sort. His opinion is of more value than that of others, but by no means conclusive. The council of war decides all important questions. There is no presiding authority. Every one has the right to speak, and the general is rather the confirmer than the originator of a decision. Joubert, for instance, had no power. Despatches went through him, and he gave the final orders

for everything which others—for example, Botha or Lucas Meyer—wished to have done. Cronje alone enjoyed complete confidence. The whole army was unpaid; every one had to give his horse, his cart if he had one, and the Government provided only arms and meat. Every one is liable to serve and must turn out, otherwise he is liable to corporal punishment. Any one who knows only European nations will think it impossible that even the smallest results could be achieved under such conditions.

Dressler had been present at the battles of Elandslaagte, Modderspruit, and Dundee. The English had dealt a crushing blow at Elandslaagte. There were 750 men on the side of the Boers—the Dutch, the German, and the Scandinavian volunteer corps, and some Boers. Those who were not killed were taken prisoners. Poor Count Zeppelin rode at the enemy shouting 'Hurrah,' with a riding whip in his hand. Two bayonet stabs in the head laid him low. Colonel Schiel was taken prisoner. Dressler ran for twenty-four hours, as far as Dundee. Two Dutch-

men fled to Pretoria. Their awful experiences caused such a panic in the capital that the Government shut them up till they had calmed down. Things went better at Dundee. The battle remained undecided on the evening of October 23, and next day the English had withdrawn. That raised the sinking courage of the Boers, and they regained their self-confidence. Then followed the well-known night affair at Modderspruit on October 29, when the mules took to flight, and the investment of Ladysmith. According to Dressler's account, Carleton's column made but a poor fight of it. After a feeble resistance, Carleton let himself be taken prisoner with 1,200 men.[1] It is impossible to form an opinion without knowing what happened. In the dark, fired on from all sides, ignorant of the road, it is possible a panic occurred. After being taken, Colonel Carleton went to Joubert with the suggestion that he and his men should be exchanged

[1] This is quite untrue. Colonel Carleton allowed himself to be taken prisoner because, when the white flag was raised by a subordinate, he felt that he could not in honour repudiate the unauthorised action.—ED.

for the Boer prisoners. Joubert refused. Carleton then reminded him that he had fought against him before, at Majuba in 1881, on which Joubert remarked that he seemed to have had bad luck when fighting against the Boers. He then invited the officers into his tent and gave them a drink. The remaining prisoners meanwhile delivered up their arms. They were then driven like sheep to the river to drink, and scooped up water in the hollows of their hands to quench their burning thirst. How I envied this young man his experiences at that time! We drank many a glass in order to refresh the memory of the narrator.

Then a young Boer of about thirty years of age appeared, who came from Mafeking, and I made acquaintance with him. His name was Daily, a lawyer in Pretoria, at that time a staff officer to General Schneeman —a nice-looking fellow with a good figure. Daily told us about Mafeking. While Dressler said the English troops in Natal shot badly, Daily said that the English at Mafeking shot very well. This was ex-

plained by the fact that Baden-Powell's men were chiefly Afrikanders, who had enjoyed the same training as the Boers. The war at Mafeking was more of sport than anything else, and they fired at the enemy as at a beast they were hunting. The victims fell one by one, shot with the cunning and artifice of a sportsman. Daily was pessimistic: his opinion was that the English were bound to conquer, sooner or later.

It was late when I went to bed, with the impression of these richly coloured descriptions on my mind. I lived at the Grand Hotel. The host was a charming man named Schlommer. He complained sadly of the war, which so damaged his business. I was his only guest. Schlommer procured me a servant, who expressed his willingness to follow me to the war: he was a Swiss, named Rösli. Next morning I was awakened early by the troublesome flies. The sun was shining with all its strength into my room, and the market-place was all astir.

Many hundred horses, mules, and cattle

were standing in front of the Government buildings, waiting to be purchased. To-day I went again to Secretary Reitz to negotiate as to getting a commission.

He told me that foreign officers were not accepted for the Boer army, because with their organisation they could be of no use. Every burgher is his own officer. Nothing would stand in the way of my fighting in the ranks of the Boers; the Government would provide me with rifle and horse. I refused, and explained to him that I was no assassin, and did not shoot innocent people, who had never done me any harm, from an ambush. We talked together for a long time over the state of affairs, and I was astonished at his knowledge of the world and of men generally. Reitz, one of the most honourable men on God's earth, full of disinterested, fiery zeal, was certainly the greatest fanatic in the country. His hatred towards England flashed in his eyes. He was a poet, and had a genuine love for freedom. But he had all the doctrines of the First Revolution in his blood: he believed in them firmly, and seemed

to be ignorant of those lessons which Europe had learnt. Uniform, order, and discipline were abominations in his eyes. Patriotism, complete abnegation of self, sacrificing everything for the general good, were, according to his views, the only incentives needed for a national army. The pleasures of alcohol and female society he thoroughly despised. Such a real Puritan one but rarely comes across. He worked without ceasing, writing and arranging everything himself—doing such work as would be done by a secretariat clerk with us. Some of the most important matters were consequently very much at sixes and sevens. All merchants of English origin were banished, without any compensation being given to them. This was the reason why for two whole months there was no sugar or coffee to be had in the country. Notwithstanding, this industrious man did an incredible amount of work. His ideas of the resources of England were too funny for words. He had no conception of the forces which could be brought to bear by such a rich and powerful country, while his

confidence in the success of the Boers bordered on the ridiculous. On this day, December 15, the battle of Colenso took place. The excitement was intense; despatches poured in continuously. Every one thought this was the decisive day. Notwithstanding the importance of what was happening (as a defeat would have meant destruction), Reitz remained stoically calm. As far as he was concerned, defeat was out of the question.

Towards evening the welcome message came at last:—'Victory! Twelve guns and 750 prisoners captured—the English defeated!'

Pretoria remained silent as the grave. No jubilation, no outward joy, nothing to show the real excitement. The Boers are passionless men, and, though happy like children, they are never enthusiastic. Reitz showed me the telegram without saying a word, and with a gesticulation as much as to say: 'There, you see, I knew how it would be.' I must allow that it affected me, and I conceived a great respect for this fanatical servant of his nation.

I went into the office of the 'Volksstem'

to learn more details, and was introduced to Dressler senior—a pleasant well-bred man, who had a tremendous amount of work to do. He knew no more than was known in the Government buildings. Soon afterwards, Kruger's doctor, Heimann, a Belgian by birth, arrived, and I was introduced to him. As I afterwards learnt, he was quite at home in the President's house, and enjoyed his complete confidence. He invited me to come and see Kruger, and offered to arrange an audience for me for the next day at 6 A.M. Now that was not my customary visiting hour ; however, other lands other customs—I accepted. Dressler promised to act as interpreter, as the President only spoke Dutch. At 6 o'clock next morning I went to Kruger's house. He was sitting in the little verandah in front of his small mansion, smoking a short pipe. Round him sat several Boers—Wollmarans, chief member of the Executive Council, and looked upon as the future President ; Kruger's son, Tjart ; Elof, his son-in-law ; also a wounded captain of artillery, who had been shot in the foot

at Dundee. Kruger, a grizzled old man, with a shabby old top hat on his head and a frock-coat which had not been brushed for years, wearing huge blue horn spectacles, was in the best of spirits. I was presented to him, but as he is deaf it was some time before he grasped the situation. He then chatted away in a friendly manner. He was delighted over the victory at Colenso, the number of prisoners, and especially over the guns. 'Yes,' he said, 'the Boers can shoot, and that is everything!'

He then related to me how he went to England and craved from the Queen the freedom of his people. He pointed to heaven and said—''Tis He who orders everything from above!'

They offered me coffee, which I should have refused, but a significant look from Heimann gave me to understand that I must drink it, and I did so. Kruger is an exceptional sort of man. He is physically and mentally a giant. Tall and broad, with a great, deep voice, he must possess extraordinary bodily strength. His limbs are in

keeping, and he has a splendid chest. He has lost a thumb from one hand, which he is said to have cut off himself with a table knife because it had shown signs of blood-poisoning. He sticks to his black pipe, and puffs and spits continuously. He drinks only water and coffee. He has only once drunk wine in his life, and that was at Bloemfontein, after the signing of the alliance with the Free State. He then drank off a glass of champagne, and put down the glass with a face of disgust. Kruger has many children and seventy-five grandchildren ; almost all the males are at present at the front. His wife was a Du Plessis, and I was very sorry to miss seeing her. Opposite his little house is a church, in which the President often preaches.

Kruger is not a President according to the real meaning of the word—he is a Dictator. The Constitution of the Transvaal can only be described as radically Republican, and to such a Constitution only a Dictator is suited ; otherwise, anarchy would prevail. I will take this opportunity

of saying something about this interesting Constitution. Instead of a Ministry, there is an Executive Council. Like the President, it is elected by the people, and consists of six members. Each of them is in charge of a department. Secretary Reitz conducts the home affairs; Wollmarans, who acted subsequently on the Peace Commission, had the greatest weight after Kruger, and he was generally looked upon as the future President. Joubert was the Commander-in-Chief; Cronje, the General, superintendent of native affairs. The other members of the Executive Council were S. M. Burger and S. H. M. Koch, the latter of whom has died during the war. He was responsible, if I mistake not, for the administration of justice.

The Executive Council is formed of men of the highest reputation among the people, and exercises control over all affairs. It is responsible to the first 'Volksraad,' the Parliament proper, which, however, was entirely led by the Executive Council. Opposition there was practically none, for very few dared to whisper the word reform. The Reaction-

aries and Nationalists had an overwhelming majority. There was also a second 'Volksraad,' but its action was very circumscribed, and its decisions had to be ratified by the first 'Volksraad,' even if merely *en bloc*. The elections were free enough, and one might say that parliamentary government had here attained its culminating point, but could not express itself, for the omnipotent Kruger would brook no resistance. In this characteristic may be traced a likeness to Bismarck.

Every burgher had the right to vote. You will ask what was the source of Kruger's power, and I believe that I have found the answer. The Government, which in this case was the President, had the disposal of a large number of farms, the property of the State, which were leased gratis to burghers who had no property. Such farms varied in size and productiveness. A man with a few cattle received a small one; and so on, in proportion to the number of cattle he possessed. It is conceivable that the fathers of families would ingratiate themselves with those in

power in order to provide for their offspring.

In addition to this, the Government had the right to commandeer horses, carts, oxen, mules, Kaffirs, if necessary. This commandeering would hit a man very hard, and naturally the first to suffer were those who were unpopular.

Apart from all these material reasons, Kruger, on account of his Boer characteristics, had a great charm for the people, and enjoyed their unlimited confidence. It is to be noted that the Boer is by nature very obedient, and never opposes his lawful superiors. He observes the precept of Holy Writ: 'Let every soul be subject to higher powers, for there is no power but from God; and those that are, are ordained by God. Be ye subject, therefore, to every human creature for God's sake.' 'Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.'

It was for this reason only that it had been possible to rule the country without

police, gendarmes, or soldiers. Laws were issued, but there was no one to see if they were obeyed. That went without saying.

I may add that I have never seen a people naturally better behaved. This will change. Once they have lost the habit of obedience, the Boers will only submit to foreign officials when force is exercised. The Transvaal is not rich in officials. Besides those in the Council, and the judges, there are only the Landrosts and their assistants. The Landrost corresponds to our Bezirkshauptmann, or the French Prefect (district magistrate). They are mostly foreigners—Dutch—with a certain number of burghers who have studied in Cape Town. The Landrost performs all official duties, and is the most respected man in the district. All those I got to know I found conscientious, capable men. The manner in which justice is administered is exemplary. The head judges in Pretoria are Dutchmen, and draw 1,000*l.* a year. The head judge was a young man, and thoroughly trusted. I must say the whole

Government apparatus, so far as the Dutch race were concerned, was excellent.

The standing of the Kaffir in the Transvaal is worth notice. While in the English colony they enjoy equal rights with white men, and even have a vote, in the Transvaal their standing is very different. The Kaffir must not walk on the pavement, he must salute every white man, and must not leave his house after 9 P.M. There is a heavy punishment for the landlord who sells him alcohol. As the farms lie scattered far from the towns, every Boer has the tacitly recognised right to punish his blacks. He never does it in passion. When the Kaffir does anything, he is told to appear the next day at a certain hour. He is then tied to the wagon, the braces are damped, and he gets the necessary number of lashes. The Kaffir undergoes his punishment with resignation, the blood often running from his back, and he makes it a point of honour not to cry out or give any sign of pain. This power of chastisement is an absolute necessity for the farmer; he could not maintain his authority

without it. The Kaffirs in Cape Colony are a public calamity; in the Transvaal they are useful and smart men, which is entirely attributable to the practical laws. The whole Boer legislation is on a practical basis, and free from the traditions of Roman, Old German, or Gallic law books. One law which struck me, for example, obliges the farmer to get rid of certain sorts of weeds, and if any such are found on his farm he is fined.

Useful birds, such as the vulture and the carrion kite, are protected, and whoever shoots one of these birds is fined 10*l.*

Religion plays the most prominent part in this country. The book of books is the Bible, and, what struck me particularly, the Old Testament. Every one can read, and, as a rule, write well. They learn from their parents at home. The female element can play a sort of organ. Singing is practised diligently, and is an important part of their religious service. So rigorously do the people follow their teachings that the most harmless things are looked on as profane. A gentleman told me that on a shooting

expedition, when, at a certain farm, he sat down to the harmonium and played a waltz, the proprietor at once came to him, and severely informed him that he did not allow such music to be played in his house.

Typical of the people is the tenacity with which they cling to their manners and customs, looking upon them as the only correct ones.

To return again to Kruger, many anecdotes are told of him. One man told me of Kruger's first visit to London, and how he learnt there for the first time the use of the night-shirt. He brought a dozen back with him. Formerly he had gone to bed in his trousers. When his wife saw him in a night-shirt she was so terrified that he had to go back to his old custom. The principal part of Kruger's toilet consists in putting on and taking off his top hat, which he seems to look on as the emblem of his dignity. At night he takes it off, and his first act on getting up is to put it on again.

He spends little time in washing and brushing. At the time of my visit the old

man was suffering from his eyes. His eyelashes were growing into his eyes, and caused him a great deal of pain. Heimann treated him daily, so far without very great success.

I stayed at the President's till 7 A.M., and then went, in company with his son, Dr. Heimann, and Dressler, to the station, where a great convoy of prisoners was about to arrive. There was a crowd of people assembled there. The prisoners were from Colenso, where the big battle had been fought on the 15th.

The train soon arrived. They excluded the crowd from the platform; we alone were admitted.

A long train came in and stopped. The first carriages, which were first class, contained officers, then came cattle-trucks with the men. The poor people had been cooped up in the heat for forty-eight hours. The officers sat in their compartments sad and mortified. My heart bled for them. The Boers treated them respectfully, and I was edified by the tact which they displayed.

The officers were allowed to get out and

prepare to march off. A colonel, named Bullock, a smart, soldier-like looking man, had his head bound up. On asking about him I was told as follows. When his regiment, decimated and surrounded, surrendered, he, revolver in hand, refused to deliver up his arms. A blow with the butt-end of a rifle from behind brought him to the ground. Then, however, as he still threatened to fire, he was given a second blow on the head, so that he lost consciousness, and his arms were then taken from him. I cannot say how I admired this man. When one saw these officers and realised what fearful dangers they had gone through, and then after enduring so much to end thus, one felt more like crying than anything. A major went from carriage to carriage counting his men before handing them over. When he had shouted out with trembling voice, 'Farewell, lads!' he gave the word 'March!' and the officers moved off under escort. Five of the captives, volunteers, were led off to prison, for it turned out that they were Transvaal subjects.

The same day I made acquaintance with

an Austrian—Baron Kellersperg—a very good fellow, and dined with him and the Italian Consul, Baron Morpurgo.

Next day, the 18th, my purchases were completed, my tent ready, for which I had been waiting so long, and nothing stood in the way of my departure. I was present at the funeral of a German doctor who had fallen near Ladysmith, and who was taken to the cemetery on a gun-carriage with six grey horses.

It was an imposing ceremony, and under the Boer colours.

At 12 o'clock I started for Bloemfontein. There were a lot of people at the station to say good-bye, and the Italian Consul, who seemed to be a man of the world, brought me a bottle of Pommery, extra dry. There were a lot of Boers in the train, and all the compartments were crammed full. The heat was such that the sweat poured from one's forehead. There were six Boers in my compartment, and they were continually spitting all round my feet, so that I had my work cut out to keep clear. The guard of the train

had taken my cushion, and snored on it for hours. The Boers with me were right good fellows: they offered me everything they had—apples, milk, bread, &c. With them everything is common property, and one never eats or drinks without offering to share with the others. I had some chocolate with me, and gave it them. They pronounced it excellent. At night the train stopped, and went on again next day.

Towards the evening of the 20th I arrived at Bloemfontein.

CHAPTER V

BLOEMFONTEIN AND JACOBSDAL

CHANCE led me to the Free State Hotel, where an old man was standing in front of the door. He recognised me immediately. He was the proprietor of the hotel, Stoell by name, and in 1896 had travelled with me to Europe on board the 'Norman.'

He at once gave me his best room and promised to help me all he could. After dinner he sent for the German Consul, Dr. Stollreiter, a Bavarian from Augsburg, who placed himself at my disposal. He was a splendid fellow and very kind, and I owe him my everlasting gratitude.

I required a cart, mules, and horses, and the next day he tired himself out procuring them for me. It was not easy, as the war had swallowed up everything. But Dr. Stollreiter never rested till he had succeeded,

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in the course of a few days, in fitting me out. I was thus obliged to spend Christmas here. The heat in Bloemfontein was so intense I could hardly bear it. I did not walk; I used to stagger over to the club, where one could at all events get something to drink, even though it was hot.

The day after my arrival I met the local Landrost, Pappenfuss, who was certainly the most charming Boer I ever met. I never expected to find such good manners here. Pappenfuss took me to President Steyn. Mr. Fischer was there, the man who went to Europe in the Peace Commission.

Steyn is a fine man, a European with a clever, striking face, which is surrounded by a big well-groomed beard—a model of sincerity and candour, and a Boer President *par excellence.*

He is no Dictator, but a mild, constitutional Republican. He had not so easy a task as Kruger, even though the Free State has similar State institutions to the Transvaal; the people are quite different. The Orange Boer is better educated and more

cultivated than the Transvaal Boer. The proximity of Cape Colony has had its effect, and the bourgeoisie of Bloemfontein is much more advanced than that of Pretoria. The country has not so far shown the same fierce party spirit against the Uitlanders as the Transvaal. The contingent of English settlers and people holding appointments is very large.

The Free State has till now got on very well with England, and the present state of affairs is quite artificial. The Free State is very poor, and its officials are much worse paid than in the Transvaal, but are better educated. Steyn could not assume the *rôle* of Dictator like Kruger, because the peril was not evident, the majority in the 'Volksraad' was not so pliant and united, and because the need for a Dictator did not exist.

But Steyn enjoyed the confidence of his fellow burghers almost to a greater degree than Kruger, for he was no king of nepotism, and his hands were absolutely clean.

He received me in a most friendly way, and I stayed with him more than an hour.

The question which interested me most was the conception formed of the future by prominent men. When in Pretoria I had sought to discover the ultimate objects of the Boers.

I found that there was nothing definite, only castles in the air, and no two had the same idea. The press advocated the United States of South Africa, the same idea as Rhodes, but under a different flag. Kruger himself only wanted Natal, with the port of Durban. Others wished for no increase of territory, only wanting their independence. These were the Transvaal aims, where every one thought more of the profits from the gold mines than of anything else. In reality the Boers looked on the mines as property of which they had been swindled, and hoped to turn the gold industry into a State affair.

The Free Staters were poor: they could barely maintain their fiscal existence, so their first object was the annexation of the diamond fields. This war made possible the attainment of their wishes, and before their eyes

hovered the possibility of re-establishing the old frontiers, so that Kimberley would belong to the Free State.

As a result of their successes they were elated and self-confident, but Steyn did not appear sanguine of ultimate success.

He seemed to feel the necessity of excusing himself for taking part in the war, and explained to me that the Free State had only taken up arms because, if they had not, the English would soon have annexed them. They had got maps of the future South Africa, in which the Orange Republic appeared incorporated with Cape Colony, and had made plans for the march of their troops through the Free State.

Dr. Leyds had succeeded in getting the scheme for the advance of the troops out of the English War Office, and in this, which was dated 1896, the main army was to march on the Transvaal *viâ* Bloemfontein. This fact chiefly influenced Steyn in his decision.

At the taking of Dundee they had found further confirmation of these facts.

Steyn said that the Dutch movement embraced every one in South Africa, and that his people hated the English just as much as did the Transvaalers. He said the centre of the movement was in Cape Town, and that the Colony was far more hostile to the English than the Free State itself. The English yoke appeared light, but it was unbearable, for it is England's fixed policy to take all she can out of the country.[1] Not alone the Boers, but all foreigners who were not English, were standing shoulder to shoulder against the oppressor. Besides, he added, a lost war by no means signifies a lost cause. South Africa will never become English. He himself was no enemy of England, but he was above all a Boer. He also pointed out that in the Free State the same drastic measures had not been taken against the English settlers during the war as in the Transvaal, where they had banished them all, without compunction.

A main point, however, in his mind was

[1] That the author should allow this extraordinary statement to pass without comment does not say much for his knowledge of our colonial system.—ED.

that the time for the union of all the South African States had not yet arrived. For this a further development was necessary. The feeling that they belonged to one another was not yet general and firmly rooted. The war would strengthen the loose organisation of the Afrikander Bond, and he had no doubt of the final result, however the present conflict might end.

President Steyn deserves the sympathy which is due to an honest man and a warm patriot. I am afraid, though, that he was grossly cheated by slim Oom Paul. There is one thing certain. The Free State had had as little idea of a war with England as Switzerland had of a war with France, for they had no rifles, no guns, no ammunition to hand. It was only at the eleventh hour that orders for these were given, and only a small portion arrived.

Was Kruger right in dragging the Free State into the war with him? If there really were proofs that England would not respect the neutrality of the Orange Republic, then certainly, Yes. I cannot, however,

believe that England would have thus made light of the law of nations.

If the neutrality of the Free State had been respected, the English could only have pressed into the Transvaal by Natal, and then perhaps the war would never have ended. The Transvaalers could in this case have besieged Kimberley, destroyed the railway, and made it impossible for the English to advance on that side. Many Free State Boers could also have joined the Transvaalers without altering the aspect of neutrality. Uncle Paul knew this well, but he had ulterior motives of greater importance. The adhesion of the Free State would be the first step towards the adhesion of all the Afrikanders of Cape Colony. This did not come off, or at all events only in a small degree. The reason why the Cape Colony Dutch hesitated to join was on account of the false tactics of the Boers. Immediately after the declaration of war, instead of pressing as far as possible into Cape Colony, they lost valuable time in puerile siege operations, and allowed the English to bring up reinforcements. What

could have induced them to act like this must remain a riddle to every thoughtful man.

Kruger had also reckoned with a reverse, but this would not put an end to his scheming. He said to himself that a conquered Free State, over which the horrors of war had passed, would remain true to the Boer cause until the last drop of blood had been shed.

There can be no doubt but that South Africa will only remain English while garrisoned. The war will be unending.

As I left the Government building there was a man standing outside with a deep scar over his left eye, in which one could easily have put one's finger. Pappenfuss, who was with me, spoke to him, and it turned out that this man had been wounded at Modderspruit, and had only just left the hospital. He related how he saw the shell burst about fifty yards off, and that after some moments he fell unconscious. After eight days of unconsciousness he began to come to himself.

I then went to the club to have a glass with the Landrost. There were a lot of Bloemfonteiners there having their morning drink.

I made acquaintance with them, and we talked a good deal together. They were all jubilant and certain of victory. Most of them were German merchants, and were delighted at meeting a fellow-countryman from Europe.

At *table d'hôte* in the Free State Hotel I made the acquaintance of a Mr. Vjhura, a Silesian, who had a brewery and a farm in the neighbourhood. This old gentleman was charming, and a clever man, but it was not wise to speak to him about the Boers, for this is what had happened to him.

When he first came to Bloemfontein with the intention of starting a distillery, he secured for himself the right of import to the Transvaal, free of duty, from Kruger's Government. But when the distillery was in full work, the Transvaal Government, without any reason, went back on its promise. So for many years the best market remained closed to him. Now, since the outbreak of the war, as all alcohol had been forbidden, his business flourished as it had never done before, for other imports had stopped, and every one was thrown on his manufacture. It was not good,

and one could hardly tell his whisky from turpentine. 'May the war last for ever,' said he; 'then I shall recover my outlay.'

Christmas passed sadly. My only dissipation consisted in writing picture postcards. The diary which I had worked at diligently was purloined from me by the Boers, so that I have to describe everything after leaving Pretoria from memory. I have only saved my notes from February 2 onwards.

On the 27th Stollreiter at last had everything I wanted. He had found the greatest difficulty in procuring harness. Two carts, fourteen mules, four Kaffirs, and a riding horse stood in readiness. For these I had to pay a lot of money, and to purchase, in addition, a whole heap of little things which he, knowing the country, considered absolutely necessary. I cursed him at the time, but later I often blessed him. Where should I have been without the Consul?

I started about midday; my gallant bay, a fine strong half-bred, rearing and bucking like a playful stag. The mules galloped out of the town. It was a fearfully hot day, and

the perspiration streamed from every pore. I galloped along the well-worn track which they told me led to my destination, and by which all transport wagons were driving to the front. I halted at 3 o'clock, under the only tree which I had seen.

I was really happy : beautiful, wonderfully beautiful, the open country lay before me, encircled by flat-topped mountains, and these mountains hung in the air, blue, and wrapped in clouds. The air that blew over the boulders and the golden sands was so pure and clear that every breath was a pleasure, and I galloped on through this deserted country, my heart full of hope for future fame. Far behind me lay the kingdom of cares ; their wings could not follow my flight. The grey old hag, grown tired of troubling, might well have been drowned in the ocean, and the sun laughed with broad golden cheeks in the blue sky, which stretched away cloudless, like a thin gauze veil over the repose of a maiden goddess.

Another day of happiness, hope, and joy.

Only at night did I halt to await my wagon. It was 11 P.M. before the wagon, which had a team of eight mules, reached me, with curses, oaths, and bad language of every sort, and smacks of the whip which could be heard from afar. My private wagon came creeping up, bringing my servant, Joseph Rösli, and my small baggage. One of the Kaffirs, named Scott, informed me that there was a farm in the immediate vicinity, so we started off to look for it. The night was so pitch dark that we had to wait till one of the Kaffirs brought a lamp, and the road was so bad that we had to grope along on foot.

At last we came to a wire fence which barred the way, and Scott said that we had arrived. He then went into the enclosure and disappeared in the darkness. Some individual beasts came up snorting, and then a whole herd. It was quite uncanny till it was evident that the cattle were more afraid than we were. We waited about ten minutes ; then Scott came with an old man who was carrying a lantern. He was the owner of the farm. He gave me his hand, and

welcomed me in Dutch. We went into the farm, where we were accommodated. This was the first farm I saw.

A small, clean house, nice living-rooms, and among them a guest-chamber. Four Boers were sitting round the big table in the dining-room, with the old wife of the farmer, while two daughters waited. These four Boers had been with the old man, and had only got back late that evening from the front. After a short grace the meal began: cold mutton and milk and some real good bread. This supper tasted better than the finest dinner at Paillard's in Paris.

After the meal I went back to my travelling wagon, and slept splendidly till early next morning. When the sun shot out his first rays the flies buzzed with such audacity about my face that it was no use thinking of more sleep. The Boers were already awake, and the grey-bearded old farmer invited me in to breakfast.

I could now see the farm by day, and I must admit it was very inviting. The two daughters, though not very beautiful, did

their best to satisfy one's wants, waiting on me with a solemn shyness.

I got cold meat, milk, butter, and jam.

People think at home that these Boers are half savages. I can only say that they are far more civilised than our peasants.

The old farmer then showed me his property and his cattle. He had 12,000 acres of pasture, 500 sheep, and 200 horned cattle—not much in that country. In front of the house there stood a single apple tree, and on it was one big round apple. He showed me this splendid fruit with pride, and told me how often the tree had to be watered. Close to the spring were some eucalyptus which he had planted, otherwise the soil grew only heath, such as covers the whole Free State, and which served as pasture for his cattle. When I photographed him and his family he smoothed his hair and assumed a martial attitude in front of the door of his house. When I took my departure he led me again to the apple tree, and after a short inward conflict plucked the smiling apple and handed it to me. I gave

him in exchange a big Havana cigar, and rode off edified and touched.

It was evening when I reached Pietersburg, where I dismounted at a small inn. Here I got a bath. Late at night my two wagons arrived.

Pietersburg is a very small place—about twenty houses, with a church and a school. The wife of the host was an Englishwoman, he himself a German, who, being very consumptive, had emigrated here. The general feeling was friendly to the English, and I cannot say that the inn people were polite. I had to rest here a whole day, as my mules were tired. When I started again I was surprised by a bill for 5*l.* 10*s.* for one day's very ordinary board. I sent my wagons on at 4 A.M., and followed myself at about 10 A.M. At 2 o'clock I stopped at a farm which was about halfway to Jacobsdal, to await my wagons, which I had overtaken and passed.

My wagons, however, did not come. The heat had now become so intense that in my desperation I did not know what I

should do. Night came on, and still no sign of them. A Boer who had ridden along the road had passed no wagon. I was much alarmed, for what would become of me without my baggage? I was forced to spend the night here. A couch was prepared for me in a dining-room, and hardly had I stretched my weary limbs and extinguished the light when the room became alive. I sought in vain by making a noise to stop the gnawing and scampering of the mice. I had to get up and sleep in the open. My hostess, a young Dutchwoman, was much concerned. When I awoke there was still no sign of my wagons. So I rode on to Jacobsdal.

Soon after I had left the farm I came to the Modder River, which rolls along lazily in its deep bed, covered with osiers. I galloped along the bank in the sand under a fierce sun. At noon I caught the first glimpse of a camp. White tents glistened along the banks of the river—my first sight of real war. I rode to the tents, and was received with the greatest mistrust. Only after a long explanation did they point out the road to

me. I now left the river and rode over a barren plain which seemed to go on for ever. Far away on the horizon was a range of hills which looked like great bushy trees. This illusion is due to a constantly recurring mirage. My poor horse 'Pandigo' began to tire under me. He was a stout horse, but in this heat he did not relish the galloping for hours. There was no place visible for miles in front of me, and yet Jacobsdal must be somewhere near. Perhaps I had taken a wrong direction. I rode on hard till I met a mounted Kaffir, whom I stopped and questioned. The Kaffir pointed me out a shining spot not more than half an hour away. That was the roof of the church, and behind it lay Jacobsdal. In front of me, halfway to the shining roof, there stretched a big broad sheet of water. It was remarkable to find a lake here in the midst of this arid desert, and the road led right through the middle of the lake. I soon discovered that it was a mirage, such as subsequently I could see from my tent almost every day. At 2 P.M. I reached Jacobsdal. The little town lay peacefully

and delightfully hidden away in a trough—perhaps fifty houses in a great circle round a church. As I arrived I met my servant and wagons. They had taken another road and had arrived just before me. I hurried into the inn, where a lot of people were sitting and eating at a long table. My arrival had been signalled on already, so I was soon on good terms with every one.

There were present the Landrost, his assistant, the postmaster, a man of one and twenty, a veterinary surgeon (a Württemberger by birth), despatch riders, Generals Delarey and De Wet, newspaper reporters —perhaps twenty persons in all.

Before I saw or heard anything, I poured glass after glass of water down my burning throat. I then devoured some roast mutton.

The market-place was all alive. Troopers were riding in from all sides, their rifles in their hands and fastened to their hips. The two generals, the senior judge of Bloemfontein, Herzog, an insurance official named Bilse, and some field cornets who had arrived, retired into a small ante-room and

held a noisy discussion. When it was over Bilse told me that they had been planning a night attack on the railway in rear of the enemy.

They wanted to blow up a train. I begged to be allowed to accompany them, but was at first refused by General Delarey. He was a big and a dignified man, with a splendid profile and an aristocratic hooked nose. He had a long grey beard, which gave him the look rather of a prophet than a general. He had the reputation of being the ablest general in the southern army.

De Wet was a small, modest sort of man, with a something humble about him, and I cannot help laughing at the idea of his being a general. As the sun was going down the Boers congregated on the bank of the Riet River, which flows by quite near to Jacobsdal. I rode out and made the acquaintance of Major Albrecht. He was to accompany the expedition with two guns, and was awaiting the signal to start.

Albrecht's outward appearance was thoroughly military and very prepossessing.

His face was sunburnt and his uniform very much worn. His bearing was dignified and self-contained. I talked with him for a good time over the previous fights, and he spoke without any vainglory of his own doings, but with the greatest contempt for the military virtues of the Boers. The picture which unrolled itself before me was pitiable. Half-starved horses, small weakly animals which no one would credit with endurance and toughness. The general anarchy offended my soldier's eyes, and filled me with loathing for this sort of war. When the sun had gone down, and the darkness had spread itself like a mist over the land, our troops, about 700 strong, started off in the direction of Graspan. They advanced slowly and quietly at the walk. It was soon pitch dark, only in the far west the watch-fires were blazing. The little column marched on till midnight. Smoking and talking were forbidden, as we were in the middle of the country occupied by the enemy. I cannot deny that there was something exciting about it. At 1 o'clock a train passed along in front of us quite peace-

fully. That was the train we were to have blown up. There was a general feeling of disappointment: we had arrived too late.

The generals and field cornets now discussed what was the best thing to be done. They decided to destroy the permanent way. Thirty Boers, who had charges of dynamite in their pockets, went off, with a man who gave himself out as an expert, to the embankment, in order to set about the blowing up. Half an hour passed without anything happening. At last the expert came back, and cursed loudly. What had happened? The thirty Boers had left him in the lurch and bolted. There were also not more than a third of the 700 men present. And the two guns also were not there. The two generals and the field cornets waxed furious. They quarrelled noisily and lit their pipes, without thinking where they were.

We turned back again, and after a long search found our guns, which had lost their way. At 7 A.M. we once more entered Jacobsdal.

This was not a bad adventure for the

first day. The wiseheads who waged war chiefly with their tongues, and always knew what was best to be done but never ventured where there was any danger, did not tire of jeering at us. On the following day Herr Bilse was kind enough to conduct me to Cronje's camp, and to present me to him. Cronje was in a very good humour: he was sitting in his tent with his old wife, and was delighted to see me. He had been told already, and wished I would settle down in his camp, and he would look after me to the best of his ability. The camp alongside the Modder River resembled an old Germanic fortification of chariots—a huge enclosed circle of immense ox wagons in position round the tents.

Cronje's tent was green, and was in the middle. Next in order were the telegraph office and post office. The General had three A.D.C.s—two Dutchmen and a German; the former were Europeans, the latter an Afrikander. Cronje only spoke Dutch, so that I had to address him through an interpreter. He hated the English with his

whole heart and soul, and despised their mode of warfare; the Englishman to him was the incarnation of the most horrible vices—a liar by profession, and, what annoyed him more than all, a calumniator of the Boers.

Cronje would not admit that the Boers were rude and uneducated and half savages, as the English papers would have people believe. He gave me the impression of having more heart than mind. His vanity was visible in his eyes. His wife, a motherly little old woman, grinned continually with her toothless mouth, and was evidently puzzled at it all.

From Cronje's camp we rode along the Modder River to the positions. The land, a great plain, stretches away from the river, broken to the east by a chain of hills which forms a great semicircle till it reaches the Riet River, while in the centre another chain of hills branches off in the direction of Kimberley. About eight English miles from the main camp there was a smaller one commanded by General De Wet and Major Albrecht. Half an hour's ride from

here began the front of the Boer lines, which extended over twelve English miles. Between the lines and the Modder there are about three English miles of level ground—flat as a table and absolutely barren. The only thing growing there was a sort of heath, and on the crest of the hill some low bushes from which were hanging great birds' nests. Horses, mules, and cattle were to be seen grazing in all directions, and as far as the eye could see were the half-dried corpses of beasts. Hundreds of great kites circled in the air and squatted on the ground: they appeared to be quite fearless, for they would let one approach quite close to them. There are hares and wildfowl here, also a sort of snipe with long red legs, which uttered a most curious cry. There were also numbers of marmots, which the Boers call 'Meer Kat.' These burrow underground and make holes which are dangerous to people riding. Everywhere as far as the eye could see were ant-hills, which are all of like size and shape: they are usually about thirty inches high, half a yard in diameter, and

hard as stone. There is a sort of gazelle called a steinbok, and a small fox, but they are not often seen. Jackals, which are said to be plentiful, I have not come across. A sort of hazel hen, called Koran, which fly in couples, start up frequently, calling loudly.

Bilse, an untiring cicerone, showed me the whole battlefield of Magersfontein, where so short a time previously war had raged with all its horror. The Boer trenches were in two lines, about sixteen hundred and fifty yards apart, between the hills and the river: they continued from the hills to the railway which runs to Kimberley and on beyond it. The whole Boer army lived in these trenches night and day, in the greatest discomfort. Apart from the fact that they were entirely unprotected from the sun, there was a dearth of water, which had to be brought up in ox wagons, and the flies were almost unendurable. Myriads of these troublesome insects filled the air, rising from the black corpses of the horses which lay around. In front of the trenches were stretched wire fences, on which hung empty

tins, so that men advancing to attack by night must be heard.

Bilse and I rode along the trenches to the hills, speaking from time to time to the field cornets, to whom I was presented. Bilse never omitted to explain that I was the German officer who had come to see the Boers fight. They were filled with pride at the idea that they awakened so lively an interest in Europe. They were all still under the influence of the last battles, and each one had something to relate or some trophies to show.

From time to time there was a cry 'Daar is hij,' and every one sought cover: a shell burst soon afterwards near the lines.

Those were the first shots I heard in the war. We rode up the hills and along the top till we reached a gun which was in a stone casemate. It was a Krupp gun of the old pattern, under the command of Lieut. von Heyster. Formerly a German cavalry officer, he had come to Bloemfontein some six months before the breaking out of the war, on account of a serious lung complaint,

and had joined the artillery. It is very wonderful that this hard life, full of privations, has done him, an invalid, so much good. He lived here like a hermit, day in day out with his gun, and had distinguished himself in every fight by his exceptional courage. He was as delighted as a child at seeing some one from Europe, and pressed me to get him some books, which he had been without for a long time. I now climbed up on the breastwork, and saw the English camp shining in the bright sun, about seven or eight thousand yards away. Thousands of tents lay there before us on the Riet River, and a thick cloud of dust hung over them. With the aid of Heyster's telescope I could see exactly what they were doing in the camp. This peace in the midst of war seemed strange to me. They advised me not to stand on the breastwork—that the English might see me and shoot at us. After I had inspected everything, we set out on our return journey. We had hardly ridden a hundred paces when a shell came whistling through the air behind us and

burst; it was evidently aimed at Heyster, and fell between two Boers who were engaged in making coffee, mangling them most frightfully.

The warning which had thus been given us was not such a joke as it seemed at the time. Bilse and I had a good drink of Modder River, and then trotted off to Jacobsdal.

I was living there in my wagon behind a cattle-run. I spent the evenings with the German Red Cross doctors on water. Our German throats did not approve much of such a liquor, and mixed with the noisy chirping of the crickets were loud complaints of the absence of alcohol. There was one thing which was absolutely incomprehensible to us all, and that was why Jacobsdal remained so peacefully between friend and foe, and was never attacked. Five hundred lancers could have taken the place without opposition, for there were not fifty men for its defence, and even they were only there by chance.

The whole Boer position, which they

thought impregnable, was prepared against a frontal attack only. Anything in the nature of a turning movement, and the lines would have been absolutely rolled up.

I ventured to remark this to Cronje and De Wet, and received the remarkable reply: 'The English do not make turning movements. They never leave the railway, because they cannot march. Let them come by Jacobsdal; we ask nothing better.' I reflected on this explanation, but, like a good deal else that I heard at this time, I did not understand it.

In the inn, where so much intelligence congregated, politics were discussed over very bad meals. I met the correspondent of the 'Volksstem' there, and made friends with him. He was a very pleasant and educated young Dutchman, quite without any of the Boer swagger and boasting. Herr Bilse and Judge Herzog represented the general staff, and the veterinary surgeon was always the genius who opposed them. Everything was abused, and rightly too, for anarchy ruled supreme.

Before I go any farther with my story, I must describe the hospital and the care of the sick.

Four houses had been vacated and turned into hospitals, besides the Protestant and the Kaffir churches, which were used for typhus patients.

The German doctors were the bright spot in Jacobsdal ; theirs was the one place where there was discipline and order.

The hospital was lighted by a small electric motor.

The want of ice and cold water was very much felt. Notwithstanding this, the cures were phenomenal. Except those who had been shot through the heart or an artery, or had had their brain damaged, all recovered. Kidneys, lungs, intestines healed readily. The way in which the wounded met their fate was remarkable. Both Boers and the English were patient as lambs. They could be easily distinguished; the English were always clean and their hair carefully combed. Most of them were convalescent, and the German doctors were quite depressed that

there was not more to do. The contingent of fresh patients was made up chiefly of men who had damaged themselves. Some Boer was always shooting himself in the foot or the arm in order to be sent home, because he was tired of the war.

Dr. Küttner, an exceedingly clever man, took some excellent photographs with the Röntgen rays.

Typhoid was raging in the camp and increasing so much that want of accommodation soon made itself felt. The big church was quite full of sick, and new cases came in daily.

It had been quiet everywhere since Christmas, except about Colesberg, where there were occasional little fights. Had it not been for the bombardment which one heard morning and evening about Magersfontein, we could have believed that we were in a state of profound peace.

I spent a couple of days in Jacobsdal, and then moved over to Cronje's camp. I pitched my tent on the bank of the Modder River, about an English mile away from the camp,

in order to remain undisturbed. Here, too, I could find a little shade among the willows during the great heat of the day.

My servant Joseph proved himself a treasure. As far as the lack of the most necessary things permitted, he arranged everything most comfortably. My mules and horses were made fast to one wagon, while the other served as a sleeping place. A shallow hole with a couple of stones at the sides formed my kitchen, and for fuel we used dry manure. Meat was provided for me from the camp, and in twenty-four hours was no longer eatable. There was nothing to be had but meat: the water of the Modder River tasted of stinking fish—it was no wonder, considering the number of dead horses which were rotting in it. The colour of the water was brown, and its temperature high, so baths were not of much use for cooling one. As a matter of fact, I only spent the nights here; during the day I was always on the move. Great herds of sheep and goats often came to visit me; we had the greatest trouble in driving them away. The heat here held

great orgies; we had to put up with it as well as we could. The very sand was so hot that one could feel it through the soles of one's boots. The nights were cool, sometimes absolutely cold.

CHAPTER VI

CAMP LIFE ON THE MODDER RIVER

In order to give the reader a clear idea of the situation, I must relate what had already occurred. After the declaration of war Cronje commanded the troops besieging Mafeking, and a General Prinsloo the Free Staters, who were besieging Kimberley. When the relieving army under General Lord Methuen advanced, General Prinsloo moved out against him, and came upon the enemy at Belmont. Although he occupied a splendid position, he himself was the first to take to flight, and thereby gave the signal for a general retreat. For this he was removed, and Cronje was sent down with his Transvaalers. Wessels was elected General and Commander-in-Chief of the Free Staters in place of Prinsloo. On November 29 the

English attacked the Boer position on the Modder River, which was close by the station of that name. Here the Boers for the first time made a stand ; the bed of the river affording them excellent cover. The day ended without any decisive result, and there was no reason for quitting the position. During the night, however, singly and in groups, the Boers went back : Major Albrecht and two guns narrowly escaped capture, and it was entirely owing to the courage of a Herr Augenstein, an Israelite from Frankfort, that the guns were saved. They now moved to the position at the foot of the hills which I have already described, and entrenched themselves. They left the space between the hills and the Modder River unoccupied ; and the English seem to have learnt this fact from spies.

On December 9 the English began shelling the hills with a murderous artillery fire. Not a stone, not a bush was left unscathed ; all were smashed to pieces, but not a single Boer was killed. They were lying down in front of and near the hills, exactly where the

English had been told they were not. The artillery bombardment went on for two days, Saturday and Sunday. On Sunday evening, December 10, the English began to move from their camp and advance towards the hills. General Delarey now occupied the space between the river and the hills with 1,600 men.

At 3 o'clock in the morning General Cronje, accompanied by seven men, rode up on to the heights, when he saw in the dim light some dark forms advancing, which were moving round the advanced spurs. He asked a man who was near him what they could be. The man thought they were birds or bushes. 'No,' said Cronje, 'shoot; it's the English.' It was General Wauchope at the head of the Highland Brigade. He and all those who were in the advanced guard were shot dead. The General fell, hit by five bullets, shouting, 'Hurrah, lads, we are through!' The battle now began. The Highlanders were shot down mercilessly, especially the Black Watch, which lost all its officers on this dismal day. The battle lasted till darkness set in. The

Boers had no more ammunition. The Scotchmen had fought with an unparalleled heroism. They had been led astray; had been told that there were no Boers remaining on the heights, and had been led unsuspectingly to death. The officers, everywhere in front, had led their men, absolutely without any cover, right up to the mouths of the Boer rifles. The guns advanced to a range of 1,100 yards, and held on the whole day, till the Lancers carried them off, their own teams having been shot down.

The whole battlefield was strewn with dead and wounded, up to a few paces from the trenches. Gaiters, rags of clothing, boots, helmets, and spades are still lying scattered about, and the black stains of blood are to be seen everywhere. By one bush, where the artillery was in special peril, lay 300 dead and wounded. The Boers put down their own losses at 120 killed.

When night fell the English drew back under cover of the darkness. The wounded, having marched all night and fought throughout the day without a drop of water, remained

lying on the field, helpless, dying of thirst. What must the poor men have suffered with the shells bursting in the midst of them the whole time? The next morning the English formed up, and it seemed as if they intended attacking again, but, instead of doing so, they retreated, covered by the fire of the artillery.

The Boers assembled together and sang psalms in thanksgiving for their victory. In the afternoon the work of burying the dead and collecting the wounded was commenced, which went on till Thursday. Even now there are unburied corpses lying there.

Since Mack's time no battle has been so badly conducted as this one of Methuen's. It is all the more unpardonable in that he had under him the best troops in the world—the Scotch Guards [the Highland Brigade is meant.—Translator.] His original dispositions were a downright blunder. He had 15,000 men at his disposal. Of these he kept 7,000 men in reserve.[1] With what object?

[1] These numbers are quite inaccurate. Lord Methuen had only 10,000 infantry, of which 2,000 were held in reserve to guard the camp and communications.

There was no likelihood of a combined offensive movement by the Boers.

I do not blame his frontal attack as such—he may have been justified in that by the information which he had received ; but the way in which it was carried out shows a contempt for the elementary principles as to the conduct of a battle. A frontal attack of this sort can only be carried through in conjunction with a movement against the enemy's flank, the more so as in this case the flanks were quite open. The battle of December 11 would have been a decisive victory if but 3,000 men had crossed from the left bank of the Modder River and rolled up the Boer position. Apart from that, the manner of attacking was quite wrong. In an open country like this was, the reserves cannot be pushed on close behind the front line.

The Boers simply fired at the reserves, who advanced in close formation, while they allowed the skirmishers to get quite close up. Lord Methuen appears to be tied down to manœuvre methods, and to allow no con-

sideration for the circumstances in which he finds himself to influence him.[1]

The bed of the river, which follows exactly the same course as that followed by the troops, was not in any way utilised as cover, although there it was ready to hand. The behaviour of the British troops on this day was exemplary, and their retreat was carried out in the most orderly manner.

The Boers had marvellous luck all through. The fact that they only occupied the space between the hills and the river that very night had momentous consequences; again, that they were not attacked again on the Tuesday, when their ammunition had run out; and Cronje just riding up, so that they were not surprised while sleeping. Prince Eugene's saying appears to have come true once more: 'Justitiam belli tandem fortuna sequetur.'

From that day till the time of writing

[1] The writer appears to have no idea that Lord Methuen intended to carry the position with the bayonet under cover of darkness, and his criticism is based on a false assumption. The account, however, is interesting, as showing how very near Lord Methuen was to a great success.—ED.

nothing had changed. The English bombarded our positions every day, but caused little damage.

Except for this, there was perfect quiet, and the men's limbs were getting stiff. As there seemed no immediate probability of a battle, I went off with Römpel to look at the siege of Kimberley.

We started early and arrived towards evening at Olifantsfontein, the principal camp, where General Wessels was. Bilse and Judge Herzog were there, and the former showed me round. We rode out at 5 o'clock in the morning and visited the western part of the lines of investment. Kimberley lays partly on a hill and partly in a hollow; the besiegers surrounded the town on all sides, their line of investment being at a great distance from it. The radius of the circle of investment varied from six to ten English miles. I must admit that I had pictured an investment as somewhat different. The circle round Kimberley was more than thirty English miles in circumference, and was defended by 2,500 men. Any sort of sortie

was bound to succeed. The defenders of Kimberley, however, seemed to have been as frightened as the besiegers. Seven guns, among them muzzle-loaders of the oldest pattern, were planted at distances varying from eight to ten miles from the town, and, in order to mark the line of investment, were occasionally fired into space. The engagements that were fought here were, for the most part, of a mild description, as may be judged from the fact that in the past three months only three Boers had been killed. They knew quite well that there were only 600 regular troops shut up in Kimberley—namely, a battalion of the Lancashire Regiment; and besides these only some volunteers called the Diamond Horse, who were no good. Still, no one thought of taking it by storm.

The fiction had been spread about that there were dynamite mines laid everywhere, that would blow the assaulters into the air. This siege was great fun for the Boers. They prefer idleness to anything, and they had amusements, such as capturing cattle,

catching Kaffirs carrying letters, so that they were in their element. This sort of thing reminded one of the methods of carrying on war in the seventeenth century, when the same sort of things were always to be seen. General Wessels had under him the Transvaal General Detoit and the Free State General Kolbi. The former had his camp by the waterworks, the latter in the neighbourhood of Scholtz Nek. This day we were bound for Kolbi's camp, which was about four hours off. The road lay by Alexandersfontein and Benowdriftsfontein, where there were small detachments stationed. We made a halt in Alexandersfontein. From here we had a beautiful view of Kimberley. While we were resting a party of Kaffirs carrying a big white flag were driven out of Kimberley. The poor blacks were terribly frightened, and only recovered when they saw that they were not going to be hurt. The most knowing of them, who talked English fairly well, was now catechised and questioned. He stated that Rhodes had ordered them to leave Kimberley, as he could no longer feed

them, and had directed them to go to Methuen, who would forward them on.

The blacks had learnt, however, that Methuen wanted workmen for repairing the railway, and that this was the reason why they had been sent out. However, they did not go, but went to their homes in Basutoland. This Kaffir also repeated the story of the dynamite, and knew the exact places where the mines were situated. He afterwards said that the bombardment had so far only killed one woman and one child; further, he reported that there was great difference of opinion between Colonel Kekewich and Rhodes. What he said gave me the impression of being false, so I will not repeat any more of it.

About 4 o'clock we reached General Kolbe, who was indefatigable in explaining and showing us everything. We had to inspect every grave and every brickbat. I was so tired that I could hardly drag myself along. I must admit that the siege works were very ingeniously planned. The Boers generally seem to have an inborn talent for this work.

Night was closing in when we started to drive back to Cronje's camp. Being ignorant of the road, we succeeded in losing ourselves completely. After numerous wanderings, we reached another camp, but no one there knew the way. However, they put us in the right direction, and we drove on. Finally, at 1 A.M., we reached Bisset Farm, whence we thought we did know our way. But this belief proved to be unfounded, and we were nearly precipitated into the Modder River. Finally one of the horses jibbed, and could not be urged on. It was dawn when we reached the camp. I had hardly lain down when the daily bombardment commenced. To-day it was especially vigorous, and some shells fell in the neighbourhood of the camp. It was very exciting for the Kaffirs, and they danced about a good deal. The next day passed without anything special happening. News came in of successful encounters on the Tugela and at Colesberg. I was sick with disappointment at not having been there; in fact, I was very near starting off, for I had given up all

hope of seeing a battle here. The heat and the bother of it turned the scale. In addition, there was the painful fact that two of my horses were seriously ill. Their heads were so swollen that you could hardly see their eyes. I took counsel with the camp commandant, who pronounced it horse sickness, and bled them forthwith. Two mules, although knee-haltered, had bolted, and a Kaffir had gone in pursuit. He did not bring them back until two days later. Fourteen days of worries and hardships like this passed without any other excitement, and my spirits sank lower and lower every day. Colonel Villebois and Léon, the representative of the Creusot arms factory, turned up on January 20. Some one to talk to at last—some company. Villebois was a young fifty, a real Frenchman of the good old style. He came from Colenso, and was thoroughly well fitted out. He asked me to dine with him on the day of his arrival. We cooked this meal with the greatest care. The Colonel peeled the potatoes, washing them as carefully as if they were diamonds. He had learnt to cook

in Algiers and the Soudan, and there was nothing he liked better. Villebois was a splendid fellow, with a real French humour, and saw the amusing side of everything. He could not understand the Boers at all. As an old soldier, their doings were incomprehensible to him, and their successes still more so. Villebois had pitched his two tents in the middle of the camp, and the curious gathered round to watch the cooking. One may think what one likes of the military virtues of the Boers, but, so far as their breeding is concerned, they are perfect. They never obtruded themselves, never interrupted, never made themselves unpleasantly prominent. If any one committed any of these offences it was always a European. The Boers are a proud, well-bred people, with aristocratic instincts.

Villebois's companion Léon, a Frenchman of Jewish extraction, was our friend and comrade. We loved him as a brother, and he fully deserved it. Léon, an honest Republican, had the courage of his convictions, in conjunction with plenty of tact. I became

very fond of him, and was very happy in his society. A gifted, persevering man, with a strict sense of duty, who never spoke of himself and his own doings, although he had every right to, as he had rendered great services to the Republics. From now on we three were inseparable. Sometimes the Frenchmen fed with me, sometimes I with them. On February 23 we rode to Olifantsfontein to look for a place for the 'Long Tom' gun, my position being merely that of companion to the experts. At 4 A.M. we left Olifantsfontein, and made a tour round Kimberley from the west side, *viâ* the Waterworks.

Bilse acted again as cicerone. Many positions were proposed without meeting with the approval of the authorities. About noon we arrived at the Waterworks.

General Detoit was very glad to see us, and conducted us into his house. We had a meal (God forbid I should ever have a second like it!), and then we set off again on our circular tour. In the immediate neighbourhood was the Kampferdamm mine, a

great heap of earth, behind which was the place where they washed the diamonds. This mine is two and a half miles distant from Kimberley. Villebois and Léon, at the first glance, decided that this was the most suitable place for setting up 'Long Tom,' and really it would hardly have been possible to find a better. We now continued our ride along the west side. A steinbok antelope crossed our road, and one of the Boers of our escort brought him down at about 440 yards. He was gralloched and presented to us. Towards evening we reached Kolbe's camp. The General, having conducted us round all the positions, trenches, &c., gave us an excellent meal. I must admit that I showed but little interest that evening in field fortifications. We were entertained with beef, pastry, and vegetables, and then we all lay down in the General's tent. He was a downright good fellow. The two Frenchmen, the General, and I slept alongside each other. Kolbe's toilet consisted in undoing his braces. Next morning I woke up with an acute pain in my left hip. I had

turned over in the night and lain on a sharp stone. We had some breakfast—green coffee and fruit—and then started off. The General accompanied us, and we made our first halt at Skolze's Farm. The owner of this farm was Kolbe's uncle. His wife lived there with the uncle and her unmarried sister, who was very pretty.

At 11 o'clock we left the farm and rode towards home. I was astonished at the toughness of Villebois; at the age of fifty, and in this climate, he stood these long marches so well, and his good temper never deserted him. Next day we cooked our steinbok, which, alas! was already very high; nevertheless, it tasted excellent when roasted, for our appetite was all that could be desired. Léon produced his last bottle of burgundy, and every drop that went down one's throat was nectar. I talked a good deal with Villebois about the Natal theatre of war and what had taken place there. In his opinion Botha was the most capable general on that side, and he thought little of Joubert. On the whole, everything was much the same

there as here. The nature of the country in Natal was more favourable for the defence than here, and the line of advance for the English more confined. Villebois was loud in his praise of the English soldiers, and especially of the courage of the English artillery. With regard to the higher leading he had but little good to say. It is not my business to give a complete relation of Villebois's views, nor to abuse men who have done their best, displaying a Spartan patriotism, and before whom, as a gentleman, I bow the knee.

Villebois acknowledged that the English army, in spite of all defects, and although at present the laughing-stock of the world, would be the very best if the generals were as good as the men. He did not like the English: he always said that they were greater enemies of France than the Prussians, but he did not deny that they were first-class soldiers.

When he spoke about France he became sad. Although he was not a pronounced Monarchist, for he saw that this form of

government had but little chance, as a soldier he condemned the present *régime.* He laid down the maxim that in a republic military efficiency is a matter of no concern, and is only possible when the army stands outside politics, as was the case before the Dreyfus affair. It is always difficult, he said, to find capable officers, but still more so when they have to be sought in socialistic circles ; and when every man of family is treated as if he were a pariah. Léon also expressed his opinion on the subject very openly ; and if we three had had to settle this question it would have been decided without trouble, as are all questions into which the agitator does not enter.

One day my Kaffir, Scott, came and told me that, at a farm about sixteen English miles away, there were chickens for sale. Römpel happened to be with me with his two-wheel cart, so I put my best horse in and drove off. Scott was right : I bought four hens and two cocks, and drove back gaily, after I had made them fast under the seat. Our road led past the Magersfontein

hills, and we determined to pay Heyster a visit. As it was very hot I had no desire to walk, and drove straight across country. Römpel held on tight and did not utter a word.

Our course led us over great boulders, and about a hundred paces from our destination the cart came to grief. I fell out backwards, and the fowls escaped.

The English must have noticed us, for they commenced firing shell at us. I left my horse and everything to catch my runaway fowls. I succeeded in catching four, but two got away: the finest cock was one of them.

The fire, however, became unpleasant, and Römpel, who was holding the horse, heard the shells whistling over him, yet he did not move, thus displaying much courage in very trying circumstances.

We led the horse under cover, left the broken-down cart, and rode back to camp on borrowed horses. Scott only arrived late at night with the fowls. The most difficult question to solve now was the chicken question. How should I keep them? We

racked our brains, till at last the brilliant idea struck me of tying them to the cart: they were made fast with pack-thread round their legs. One hen died the next day, while the others, although continuing to exist, never exhibited the slightest desire to lay eggs.

Villebois and Léon shifted their domicile to Kampferdamm mine, in order to superintend the work of getting 'Long Tom' into position.

I was to follow three days later. I employed the time in a long ride towards Graspan, in order to get a correct idea of the position of the English on our left flank. The result of this ride was *nil*. I used up a horse, and never caught sight of a tent or even a man.

CHAPTER VII

TILL MY CAPTURE AT PAARDEBERG DRIFT

On the 1st of February, at 12 noon, we set out for the Kampferdamm mine, Römpel and I on horseback, and my big travelling wagon drawn by a team of eight mules. We first rode into the camp, to say good-bye to General Cronje. The General was in the best of spirits. I told him I was going to Kimberley, to see 'Long Tom' at work. Cronje laughed, and said there had been a change of plans, that 'Long Tom' was to come here, as a new English armoured train was expected. This caused me to alter my arrangements. I decided to remain where I was, and had the greatest trouble in getting back my wagon, which had gone on. It only returned into camp late in the evening. On this day I witnessed a remarkable spectacle. About 5 P.M., in a north-easterly

direction from the camp, a thick white smoke began to arise. No one knew what it was. The smoke went on increasing, and as darkness came on flames, at first orange-coloured and then red, could be seen shooting out. There was a long strip on the horizon which illuminated the sky far and wide. When the night closed in, the fire resembled a big town lit with electric light. It was a prairie fire. The dry bushes had kindled, and the flames spread rapidly. For hours I watched the different stages and light-effects of this sublime spectacle. It was as if the earth were vomiting forth fire and smoke; and the clouds lazily rolled along, all aglow, over the flaming sea of light. And before me flowed the waters of the Modder River, in and out of the shadows thrown by the willows which, as if weighed down with sorrow, dipped deep into the tide. Millions of crickets chirped, and a gentle warm breeze blew over the hot sand. It was a grand, a solemn night. The 2nd and 3rd of February I spent waiting for 'Long Tom,' which did not come.

Some of our men who had been out patrolling in rear of the enemy reported that long troop-trains were constantly arriving from De Aar. The camp was growing hourly, and general activity was noticeable. By the night of the 3rd Cronje no longer doubted that there would be a battle within the next few days. On February 4, Sunday, I went to the General and asked him where 'Long Tom' really was. He replied that the arrangements had again been altered, and that it was due at Kimberley this very day. I immediately got on my horse and set out for Kampferdamm mine. My wagon, with the mules, followed. There was a storm coming on, and the air was so full of sand that one could not raise one's eyes. The General advised me to delay my departure till the following day, as I should encounter all sorts of difficulties with the sentries. I refused to stop, and rode off with a Herr Jorison, the camp auditor (commissary). At Bisset's Farm, where we rested, we had to undergo a searching examination and to establish our identity. After some delay we were allowed

to proceed, and rode on into the night. Jorison's horse stumbled and damaged his knee. At midnight we halted, and slept in the open till 5 A.M. At 7 o'clock we reached Kolbe's camp, and by 10 A.M. were at Kampferdamm. I at once sought out Villebois and Léon, who were in the act of preparing a dainty meal. In the afternoon we set out in search of the gun, but all our searching and spying were in vain. Towards 8 o'clock, it being already dark, we returned without having effected our object.

I was tired out that day, for I had ridden many hours, mostly at the gallop, in the intense heat. 'Long Tom' was still absent on the morning of February 6, and Léon, who had ridden out to look for it at 6 A.M., returned at 1 P.M., accompanied by five French officers. These gentlemen, who had but just arrived from Europe, and belonged to every arm of the service, had already the appearance of Boers. Fine fellows, and the best of company. It was not till the evening that 'Long Tom' arrived, and Léon, Villebois, and I rode to

the place where it was to be mounted. It was night, and the Kimberley search-light threw its long white rays into the darkness. Fortunately, they paid but little attention to us, and I fancy they remained altogether ignorant of what was going on. Nevertheless, Rhodes knew that 'Long Tom' was coming; we learnt that from the Kaffirs who had fled from Kimberley. Villebois and I returned home at 11 o'clock, while Léon remained all night superintending the work. There were, however, so many difficulties to be overcome that it was not till 10 A.M. on February 7 that the first shot was fired.

'Long Tom,' one of the biggest guns in the world (its exact description is type 155), was mounted on the earth-heap close to the diamond washing. The great rusty engine-house stood close behind and below it. They had built big earthworks round to protect it. We were all present when the first shot was fired. We were unable to watch the effect on account of the dense smoke. The English then planted some shells in our neighbourhood without hitting

any one. The Boers looked on the whole affair as a 'Mordshetz,' as we say in Vienna.

They rejoiced loudly, especially when one of our shells created a great cloud of smoke in Kimberley. The results of our bombardment on this day could not be called satisfactory; the 'Long Tom,' which had been damaged at Ladysmith and subsequently repaired, seemed to have lost some of its accuracy. At 12 noon we returned to camp, to recommence the bombardment at 4 o'clock. Meanwhile the English had pushed forward guns, and fired on us with frightful accuracy. Six shells pitched in 'Long Tom's' emplacement, and we were bespattered all over with earth. The Boers who were here had not been in a fight before, and after the third shell they bolted behind cover. Finally, there were only two courageous gunners left besides Villebois and myself. A pastor, who, in a well-covered position, had just started preaching, concluded his service immediately. One shell fell among our horses; luckily they were not hurt, but they bolted away as hard as they could go. We were untouched, but five

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Boers were wounded. After a few shots the general impression was that 'Long Tom' represented a target of much too large dimensions. The confusion that existed around that gun is indescribable; every man did what he liked, and fired when and at what he pleased. One could not hope for much benefit from aimless procedure of this sort. In vain Colonel Villebois begged them to bombard one fort alone; the Boers obstinately refused. I determined, if still alive, to quit this place next morning and return to Cronje's camp, so as not to miss the expected battle.

For the time all is still, the moon shines peacefully on the now silent 'Long Tom,' and her white light smiles tenderly on the iron roofs of the town, in the midst of which dark shadows lie like heavy cares. After such a hot day, sleep comes over the spirit gently and easily, like a dark veil of silk, and closes the tired eyes, from which the light has slowly died away. The roaring of the guns weaves itself into our dreams but as a distant rumbling, far, far away. The

scent of a newly-acquired melon reminds us that there is a to-morrow, and the thought of this delicious fruit makes us look forward to our breakfast.

And this to-morrow, February 8, came.

In the forenoon 'Long Tom' was to be got into his casemate, and so there was nothing to do but wait. The French Colonel came to me, and, getting into my wagon, unburdened his heart. The five French officers who had arrived had no kit, and there were four still to come who were in the same plight. They had no tents, no cooking utensils, nothing but themselves and a suit of clothes.

For two days they had been provided with blankets, cooked for, and waited upon; but this could not go on. Villebois, as he said himself, could not cook and peel potatoes for a dozen. Besides, we had only the most necessary provisions, and in two days they had cleared us out like a swarm of locusts. They had brought letters of recommendation to the Colonel from all sorts of people in Paris, but he could not help them. As may

be imagined, on active service, more than a hundred miles from the railway, we had only what was barely necessary. My servant had stupidly offered them everything that I possessed, and when I got back to headquarters there was nothing left—absolutely nothing.

At noon a telegram arrived announcing a fight at Koedoesberg, on the Riet River. I ordered Joseph to inspan, which would take about two hours, and myself rode towards 'Long Tom,' whose bass voice was again beginning to be heard.

I rode with Léon, who had been busy supervising the entrenching in the forenoon. 'Long Tom's' layer would not give up his idea of firing at the enemy's guns. Yesterday he had squandered all his ammunition on forts, and began to do the same to-day. When we arrived, however, he began firing on the town. The effect was terrible; one heard the horrible whizzing of the shell from the time it left the gun through its whole flight. First there is a ghastly noise as it rushes through the air, and then the dull thud of an explosion; and

then one sees a cloud of smoke rising from the place where it has struck. The enemy replied vigorously, but, although they made excellent practice, no one was hurt. Towards evening, about 5 o'clock, a little white cloud of smoke rose from the middle of the town and spread over the blue sky and the hills. Amid the white there were great patches that became gradually darker and darker. Soon a great smoke cloud rolled along over the roofs, and gradually drew away towards the east, while in the west the flaming sun sank behind the blue hills. As I galloped away to the Koedoesberg battlefield, a shell from 'Long Cecil' whizzed behind me, but I was soon out of range, and there were only the white smoke and the dull roaring of the guns to remind me that war, desolation, and death were abroad. Night gradually hid the smiling face of the earth, and one by one the stars lit up the vault of heaven, and the round moon came hurrying out, bathing everything in a flood of silvery light, while in the distance General Kolbe's camp, looking like so many rows of sugar-

loaves, beckoned to me. The General invited me in to share his meal with him, and I, being hungry, immediately accepted. We sat afterwards on the top of a stony hillock, whence we could see Kimberley and its search-lights. The night was glorious, and all was peaceful: silence and slumber were encamped around, so I too entered into the dark kingdom of sleep, and became oblivious.

I rode off betimes on the 9th to Koedoesberg to witness the fight. It was very cool and pleasant, and I rode at a hand gallop to the battlefield. I could hear distinctly the guns firing on the other side of the chain of hills that lay before me, but the country here is so vast, everything so open and extended, that only by a piece of luck I reached the spot. I met an ambulance with wounded, and they pointed out the way. After a four hours' ride I arrived.

There were about 1,500 English with six guns against 600 Boers who had two guns with them. The English Lancers and Highlanders had been making a reconnaissance, and had taken up a position. When I

arrived they were already retreating, and two hours later they were to be seen moving down the Riet River. I was struck by the way the Lancers manœuvred and retired in extended order. This formation seemed to me well suited to this flat and open country.

At 10 o'clock I started for Jacobsdal, and arrived with my horse dead tired at 2 o'clock. I heard there that the Boers had had three killed and thirteen wounded during the day. I played billiards on an old table all the afternoon, and went back to camp for my evening meal. My poor 'Pandigo' is sick again, and I do not know what I shall do, as 'Bass,' my other horse, is quite broken down. Everything is coming to an end; I have no more tobacco, or butter, or fat. It is hardly credible. My mail, for which I have been waiting so eagerly, was sent after me to Kampferdamm. One letter, which had been addressed to Jacobsdal, was lost by the messenger. My case of beer, which I had been expecting as eagerly as the Jews did the Messiah, and which after many weeks

had arrived at Jacobsdal from Bloemfontein, has been drunk by strangers. I suspect the German ambulance. It was a severe blow for me—real dark Munich beer at five shillings a bottle, and there were to have been seventy-two. But fate has taught me to endure so much since I have been here, that I was able to bear this calmly and with Christian resignation, with the consolation that the time of my adversity must soon come to an end.

Here I am, on February 10, in Cronje's camp again. The situation has not altered: the English remain quiet and do nothing, the great battle has shrunk down to a little fight; and who can say how long I shall continue this wretched existence on still more wretched Modder water?

Even the English cannonade has become lazy. There is to be more fighting on the Tugela. A fugitive from Ladysmith has brought the news that 1,500 men there are down sick with typhoid, smallpox, &c., among them General White himself. There cannot be more than 7,000 men left fit to

fight. He says that on the 13th the garrison mean to try a big sortie, and if that fails they will surrender. All the supplies are exhausted; they have no more clothing or boots, nothing but wretchedness and misery. So there are people who are worse off than we are here.

To-day is a day of rest for all my beasts, and I am writing these lines in a scorching heat, amid millions of flies. I have had a dip in the yellow water of the Modder River, and so got a little cool, but the effect does not last. The odour of a leg of mutton cooking pervades the neighbourhood of my camp, and I can hear it boiling and bubbling where I sit.

General Cronje's three secretaries came to see me in the evening; the moon had risen and we were breathing again after the heat of the day, when we heard the roar of guns in the distance, in the direction of Kimberley. We made our way at once to the camp telegraph office, to find out the reason of the bombardment. We thought that the English were, perhaps, trying a

night attack to take 'Long Tom.' We, however, got the reassuring news that it was we who were bombarding the town by moonlight.

On the 11th, a Sunday, everything was quiet. I was lying on a blanket in front of my tent, drinking a cup of coffee, when a Herr Engelberts, a young Hollander, rode in from Jacobsdal to impart some cheering intelligence. First, that there were several thousand English on the move about two hours from Jacobsdal; secondly, that there was fighting going on near Rama (Ramdam?); thirdly, that since yesterday beer and whisky were procurable at the hotel at Jacobsdal. My only reply was, 'Joseph, saddle my horse.' We rode at once to Jacobsdal and thoroughly refreshed ourselves, although we had to apply to the authorities for a permit for every glass; and then, accompanied by two doctors belonging to the German ambulance, started for the place where we expected to find the English. After a two hours' ride we reached a chain of hills, from which we had a good view. Three English

patrols advancing forced us to retire. It was night when we got back to Jacobsdal. I passed the night there, and started off early next morning. At dawn the guns were already to be heard.

During the night 600 Boers with two guns had been pushed forward against the English, and Engelberts and I rode in the direction which the Boers had taken.

The heat began early ; there was not a breath of wind, and the hot dust caked on one's lips. We rode on and on through the barren, desert country, without seeing anything except distant dust-clouds rising to the sky. Then we heard shot after shot in an easterly direction. We rode in the direction of the firing and came to a farm, to which two wounded men had just been brought. They were both Inniskilling Dragoons ; one was fair and middle-aged, the other quite young : the former had been shot through the arm, the latter through the leg. They were very astonished at meeting two such friendly enemies. They told us that Kitchener was advancing with 14,000 men

—cavalry and infantry—and a number of guns; they themselves were the point of a combat patrol. Their horses had been killed first, and then they themselves wounded. They were unable to explain how the Boers had got there, for near and far there had been no one to be seen. We consoled them by telling them that we had long ago had information of their coming. Their regiment had just arrived from Colesberg, and they had no idea as to where they might be going. We left the farm, where there was not a drop of water to be had, and rode off in the direction which they pointed out to us. We soon espied the shells striking the ground and the bursts of the shrapnel. The fire was concentrated on one particular hill, so we made for it. On this hill was one of our guns, which was being fired on by twelve of the enemy's. In front of us was to be seen through the clouds of dust a long line of black forms, which advanced very slowly. I had not yet seen a single Boer. About sixteen English miles north-east of us there was another artillery fight going on.

The situation at the time was as follows : Before me was an English cavalry division with 18 guns, which was moving in a northerly direction *viâ* Blaauwbank Drift on some unknown objective. At noon on Monday the greater part of the division formed a long semicircular line on the left bank of the Riet River. I rode to our artillery, which was in position on a hill opposite Blaauwbank Drift. From there one obtained a good idea of the state of affairs, and could at the same time estimate the enemy's numbers. At that time they did not exceed 6,000 men, all mounted. Our Boers, under General De Wet and Commander Cronje, the brother of the General, were between Koffeefontein and the English, and appeared from where I was to be in rear of the enemy. I think this day, February 11, was the hottest day I experienced during the whole campaign. One could not even sit down, so hot was the ground. It required the exercise of all one's will-power to move at all. I soon perceived that the enemy was not marching on Koffeefontein,

He had changed his original direction and was moving due north. After midday everything became still, except that from time to time a hail of shrapnel was poured on us —that is to say, on the Boer guns. It was marvellous that we were not damaged. Hostile patrols rode round unhindered between our position and Jacobsdal, and I was in danger of being cut off. I decided, therefore, to ride back to Cronje's camp. On the way to Jacobsdal, near Waterval Drift, I dismounted and plunged into the water, which, hot and stinking though it was, I drank out of my hand. Just as I was doing my best to cool myself in the shallow water of the river, column upon column of the enemy, with a number of guns, crossed at the drift about 200 yards away.

For myself I was not afraid, for I crept under cover of a willow; but my horse, half-dead from fatigue, was standing there, motionless, sunk in deep meditation. By good luck 'Bass' and I were not observed, and I was soon able to trot on gaily. I reached Cronje's camp about 5 P.M. The General was not in,

so I made straight for my tent and wagon to get something to eat. My servant had prepared nothing, as he thought I would feed at Jacobsdal. It was very trying. Nor had he any meat, so all hope of a meal vanished. I lay down and rested my weary bones. The heat of the sun had somewhat moderated, and the evening was really enjoyable. I returned to the camp at 7 o'clock, to speak to General Cronje. He was in the best of tempers. With the help of a map I made him a full report of what I had seen, but he gave me the impression of not being able to read a map very well. At the end he said, 'Only cavalry, whom we shoot and capture.' I then pointed out to him that the advance of the English undoubtedly implied an enveloping movement, and that he must do something for the protection of the two drifts in our rear. Cronje laughed, and declared that the English could never march so far. I took my leave and retired to sleep. Next morning, February 12, I returned to the camp to inquire as to the latest developments.

Kaiser, the secretary, in reply, said: 'Nothing particular.' This was absurd; something must be happening to eastward; the troops could not remain quietly there doing nothing. No news had come in from De Wet. Cronje had gone, as he did every day, to the Magersfontein entrenchments.

He still expected that the attack would be made at that point, and looked for it at any time. He considered the action of the cavalry to be a harmless feint. That a large force of infantry followed in rear of the cavalry he was not aware. I had a meal at midday, having fasted for twenty-four hours, and, mounting 'Pandigo,' rode off to the scene of the fighting on the other side of Jacobsdal.

About halfway to Jacobsdal I saw a small party trotting along unconcernedly. They could not be Boers. I quitted the road, and followed across country, in the direction this party had taken. After I had ridden hard for over an hour I came to high ground, from which, to my great astonishment, I saw a regiment of English cavalry on the march.

How came the English there, absolutely in rear of our line? I galloped back into camp and gave the alarm. The Boers crept out from under their tents and wagons and listened open-mouthed. Then they laughed, shook their heads incredulously, and declared the whole story was an invention. The General's secretary, the only man of importance in camp at the time, came to me and explained that I must not excite the Boers uselessly. The General would be home towards evening, and take the necessary measures. I rode out again in order to watch the enemy's movements. A young Hollander, named Engelberts, accompanied me; but he soon turned round and rode off to safer quarters. When I reached the high ground again there was nothing whatever to be seen. Now I myself began to have doubts: was it possible I had been mistaken? Might they not have been Boers? I rode on in the direction of Ronddavel Drift. I might have been going half an hour when I again descried the regiment of the enemy. This time, however, it

appeared to me to be a brigade. I rode back to camp.

Nothing had happened there; the Boers were quite tranquil again. I now remonstrated vehemently, abused them thoroughly; but, notwithstanding, they still remained incredulous. Commissary Arnoldi wanted me to show him the enemy. That was easily said, but my horses could do no more. He placed one of his at my disposal, and after the delay of an hour we rode off. I led Arnoldi along the bank of the river in a north-easterly direction, and after twenty minutes I was able to point him out a patrol. Soon afterwards the troop itself was visible. We rode back and found the camp in great excitement. The news that some camps in the rear had been destroyed had spread rapidly, and the Boers ran along the river-bank, mounted and on foot, towards the enemy. I rode to Cronje, who had just come home. I found him in a bad temper; he seemed as if he were angry with me, as though I had brought the English there. What really annoyed him very much was that I, the

foreigner, had discovered the enemy, while his men were sleeping. The orders he gave lacked precision, and were expressed in vague terms. The excitement was so great that every one did as he liked. Towards 7 o'clock I heard the first shots. I rode in the direction of the sound, and saw that the enemy was retiring. I therefore left the Boer line, which had straightway taken up a position behind cover, and rode towards the enemy. A veldt-fire had broken out during the day in the north-east, and now, as darkness came on, it shone out redly bright. I rode on, and saw that the enemy was moving in the direction of Olifantsfontein. It appeared to me that in the distance there were large bodies marching. It might then have been 8 o'clock.

Heavy clouds were in the sky; lightning flashed through the dark firmament, and lit up everything in an uncanny way. An awful storm had burst, and before I knew where I was I found myself in pitch darkness. Nothing but the rosy glow of the veldt fire was visible. I found myself in an

awful situation, between two hostile forces in absolute darkness, without knowing the countersign. I soon lost all idea as to my whereabouts. I knew that the river lay to the east ;—but which was the east ? And was not the river swarming with our men, who fired on everything that moved ?

I could only get my horse on by thrashing him, and every moment he stumbled over stones and ant heaps. Bushes, no matter how small, became objects of terror ; grazing horses seemed hostile detachments. Added to this, the storm blew the sand mercilessly into my eyes, and though I went on and on I reached neither the river nor a road. The grass fire shone fainter and fainter, and I continually changed my direction without knowing it. I was in despair, and felt as if I could cry. Then, on a rocky ridge, I saw forms moving. The clouds, parted by the storm, had made way for the moon, and it was less dark. I bent my back as the Boers do when riding, and, taking my life in my hands, I rode straight to the ridge. As I approached I thought

every moment that the men would fire, but nothing happened. At last I reached them. I jumped from my horse and went up to them. They were very astonished, and would not believe who I was till one of them conducted me to a field cornet who knew me.

The Boers had not seen me. The sand storm saved my life. They advised me to spend the night there, but I refused their invitation, as I wanted to get home. They then showed me the way, and I rode off. I took a wrong road, and again found myself absolutely lost in the night. My horse could go no more—I had to lead him. I wandered about for hours, till a telegraph wire helped me. About 4 A.M. I got back to my tent. I threw myself down just as I was and slept.

Very early in the morning of Tuesday, the 13th, the enemy's artillery fire commenced in the immediate vicinity of the camp. I at once rode out on 'Pandigo,' poor overworked, tormented beast, who looked an absolute scarecrow. Cronje remained in his tent, and

shouted out to his Boers that they were to shoot and capture the English. One Penzhorn, his second A.D.C., rode in company with me to the scene of action. Our men lay behind stones and in the river bed, extended over three English miles—wherever there was the smallest possibility of attack. Two guns, a Krupp and a Nordenfeldt, rattled along rapidly behind me. One could hear rifle and shell fire, but whence it came, where our men were, and where the enemy was, nobody knew. I was convinced that the enemy must be about the drift, and that that was the only road for us to take. I sought energetically to impress this on the field cornet, but, as usual, without inducing him to take any action. Helplessness, anarchy, and confusion prevailed. I rode on to the summit of a hill with the artillery. A section of cavalry was coming up on us from the river. We fired two shots into them. A Boer then came running up and declared that they were our men. He was wrong, however—they were English we had fired on. The Krupp gun soon became the

target of the hostile artillery, and shrapnel after shrapnel burst in our vicinity, mostly behind us.

In a dip further to the west lay the Kalkfontein Farm. There was hard fighting going on there. Commandant Debeer with a gallant detachment defended himself courageously. Penzhorn rode back to call up men to reinforce Debeer, but no one was willing to go. The artillery fire in the open field shattered the nerves of the Boers—they rode off in ones and twos. As I went back to Kalkfontein Farm I saw a white horse galloping over the veldt. I rode after him and caught him, although the bullets did their best to prevent me—I wanted a horse so badly. I mounted my capture, and so took the weight off 'Pandigo.' It was now noon: the sun gilded the smoke of the guns and the fight began to slacken.

The firing soon stopped. Major Albrecht, who had ridden up from Magersfontein, took over command of the guns, and sought a better position further to the west.

I returned to camp, where my midday

meal awaited me. I was in a bad temper, for there could no longer be any doubt as to the result of the English movement. Since I had been here I had pointed out to Cronje and everybody that this was the only way to Kimberley for the English, but had met with nothing but incredulity. The time had now come for it to be proved.

President Steyn's brother, Landrost in Jacobsdal, rode in and asked for men for the defence of that place, which was threatened. Cronje refused him—he could not extend his line of operations in this way. Already he had scattered his men far and wide. The Landrost came to me and shared my mid-day meal. He had brought a bottle of whisky with him, which did not enjoy a long life. In spite of the serious situation, he was in capital spirits.

A telegram then arrived that Colonel Henry and a hundred mounted men of the Northumberland Regiment had come to Jacobsdal, visited the hospital and the Landrost's office, and ridden on further.

The news was received as if it were a

good joke. The self-confidence of the Boers was not to be shaken. At 4 o'clock we rode out to the battlefield. The ambulance wagons were doing their work. Each wagon carried four wounded men. Many died on the way ; others, in a state of unconsciousness, awaited the time that they should pass away. I conducted the Landrost to the place where the fighting had taken place in the morning. The Boers were at work entrenching the Nordenfeldt-Maxim. With the aid of the telescope one could see in the far distance large forces of mounted English on the march. They were all moving in the direction of Kimberley. Cronje, who had also come out, continued to assert that the attack would be made against the front, and that this was only a feint. The evening passed quietly, without any excitement. Later, alarming news came in of large bodies of the enemy's troops advancing, and this time it was infantry. Cronje began to realise the situation. I lay down in my wagon and went to sleep at once, although our situation was as dangerous as it was

possible to conceive. As all the troops were scattered about at great distances, the camp was exposed to any hostile attack which might be made.

At 2 A.M. on the 14th the order was given to break up the camp. I guessed what was happening from the commotion, but remained where I was. At 4 o'clock my wagon moved off without waking me. When I awoke at 7 A.M., I found we had moved to another camp. It lay in a hollow, hidden from view, and so was more or less safe from attack. The roar of the guns and cracking of the rifles was going on all around. I rode out, and straightway came on flying Boers. One had his face torn by a shell, which had burst near him. Two dead Boers and some horses lay close by. One wounded man was shouting for help, and shells were falling and shrapnel bursting all round. I tried to induce the Boers to stand, but in vain; they made straight for the entrenchments. The superiority of the English was too great. The moving of the camp had created a general panic. As I realised that

the day was lost, I rode back to camp, where Colonel Villebois had just arrived. He was also of opinion that it was a hopeless business. A telegram arrived to say that there was fighting going on around Jacobsdal. I started off there with the Landrost. When we reached the summit of the hill whence one can see Jacobsdal, we perceived 5,000 Englishmen steadily advancing. The Landrost turned and bolted, while I galloped on into the place. The bullets were already rattling on the walls of the houses, and all over the place. I rode to the hotel and drank a couple of bottles of some beer which had arrived the day before—the first we had seen for two months. Thirst was hardly the right name for my complaint; my tongue had the dryness of the Sahara. An English staff-surgeon and a member of the German ambulance kept me company. I went on to the hospital, into which the wounded were continually being brought. Colonel Henry, who had been wounded after leaving Jacobsdal yesterday, was lying there. I sat on his bed and had a talk with him. The bullets

were whistling all round the hospital, and every one was trying to get under cover. I saw our Boers flying. Soon after, as I left the house again, accompanied by Dr. Hildebrand, the English marched in. I jumped on my horse, and, in a hailstorm of bullets, galloped hard for over a mile, covered by the dust with which the bursting shells smothered me. I was the last to leave Jacobsdal. I shall never forget that ride. The bullets buzzed through the air like swarms of bees, and, striking the ground, threw up little clouds of dust. I rode as hard as I could. Suddenly 'Bass' came to a standstill. I dismounted and found that my brave steed had been hit. I now ran on, on foot. Fortunately, I met my wagon and 'Pandigo.' My servant had come after me to Jacobsdal. I at once mounted 'Pandigo,' and ordered my servant to come back. I rode into camp; it was in a helpless state. Cronje was sitting in his tent, quite broken, and his wife was stroking his head. Boers entered and asked for a council of war. Cronje replied that it was impossible that he

could call the officers away from their men at that juncture. Those present then talked and made their suggestions. It was proposed to fly to Boshof, and leave Kimberley alone. The end of the discussion was that flight was a settled fact.

I invited Colonel Villebois to feed with me, and he gladly accepted. My wagon was again standing where it had been all the time of my stay, and we rode to it. The young Hollander, Engelberts, joined us. We had our evening meal on the bank of the Modder River, and night with all its mysteries fell upon us. The moon was high in the heavens, and its white light poured down like a stream of silver, illuminating the dark earth. Any moment the enemy might trot up; it was mere chance that he did not. We two now held a council of war as to what was to be done. Villebois had left his wagon at Scholz' Farm, and had to go back there. I would not fly with Cronje—it was contrary to my principles. After long reflection, I came to the conclusion that the only other thing to be done was to steal

through the enemy's lines, which formed a great circle round us.

About 9 o'clock Villebois rode off. As he went, his last question was which of us two would draw the prize and which the blank that day. My poor animals had had no food the whole day, and had to keep going. 'Pandigo' was miserable, and searched the ground in vain for something edible. At 10 o'clock we started, the mules with the wagon in front, and Engelberts and I behind.

We advanced slowly and silently. I had chosen the road by Paardeberg Drift. Once that was passed we were safe. The nearer we got to the enemy's lines the greater was the excitement. I believed that our people were still holding the drift, but it was impossible to say whether they had not already quitted it. The moonshine conjured up terrors all around. Were those not tents there on the river? No, they were Kaffir huts. Suspicious-looking objects were always springing up. A light in the distance. So the English were encamped there. It was a

long way off, and to the west of our road. But on the left bank of the river a light appeared, and then disappeared again. It began to get uncanny. It seemed to me that I heard voices just past midnight, and Engelberts thought the same. I advised crawling into the wagon and leading the horses behind. We might possibly get through thus as an ambulance wagon. We crawled into the wagon. Through the silence we heard the creaking of the wagon wheels, and the repeated smacking of the whip on the mules. At last we reached the drift. There was nothing, absolutely nothing, suspicious to be seen. We turned in to make the passage. Just then a deep voice resounded from the bushes, 'Who goes there?' 'Friend!' shouted Scott, my Kaffir. The blood stood still in my veins. There was no more doubt; we were captured. 'Halt!' was shouted from the bushes, and three English soldiers advanced to us with fixed bayonets. We got out, and all went to the company commander, who was not far off. The whole company was sleeping

in lightly thrown-up trenches in a semicircle. On one flank Major G——, the commander, was stretched at full length, the moon shining on his ruddy, smooth-shaved face. After a little struggle he managed to wake, and got up and snapped all round generally before he deigned to look at us. Then he stuck his eyeglass in his eye, and from his dizzy height looked us up and down suspiciously. My servant stood there terror-stricken and helpless, like a man awaiting the execution of his death sentence. A sergeant and some men were now aroused, who were not very pleased at having to leave their resting-place. We were fallen in one behind another, with a soldier, each armed with a drawn bayonet, on either side of him. The Major then gave secret orders to the sergeant, and on the command, 'Quick march!' we started off. Engelberts marched along in front of me, as if he had never done anything else. Joseph came behind me, and then the Kaffirs. Our way led past a Boer camp which had been destroyed, and the air was heavy with the stink of putrefying horses.

We soon saw a number of huge fires, which were widely scattered. It was Kitchener's camp, about 15,000 men. We now had an interminable tramp. Every regiment camped separately with its train. This multitude of troops sleeping was a fine sight. They lay on the ground in long lines, their rifles being piled. Our escort belonged to the Essex regiment, and we sought everywhere in vain for its camping-ground. No one of the many we asked was able to direct us to it. Three hours passed thus without our succeeding in finding our object. The sergeant then ordered that we should take a rest. We sat down on the ground, and chatted good-humouredly with the soldiers. They were fine fellows, without the least sign of brutality—in fact, full of sympathy. They had every right to be angry with us, for we had spoiled their sleep after they had gone through a trying day; yet they did not visit it on us in any way, and were most kind. They even shared their drinking-water with us. I cannot describe what my feelings were that night. A prisoner!

There is nothing in war which makes one feel more ashamed. And then to be marched about from place to place like a criminal, with no idea as to what the future will bring forth, and the weariness and fatigue. What days of excitement and exertion they had been! After a short rest we marched back again whence we had started. Major G—— was again aroused. Half awake, half asleep, he swore a little, and then ordered us to remain where we were, and a guard to be placed over us. I did not sleep, though I was so tired. The anxiety of anticipation and the excitement of the night made it impossible.

It was already 4 o'clock, and at 5 A.M. the roar of the artillery began not far off. As I subsequently learnt, Cronje tried to force his way through with all his men, having abandoned a part of his train.

When I got up and inspected my wagon I found that during our wanderings I had been cleaned out of everything. Even the book in which I was wont to write my poems had disappeared. It had a brass

rim, which was probably mistaken for gold. I was saddened by this discovery. All my mementoes of the war had gone; the photos which I had taken were destroyed; my letters had disappeared. I had not a towel, shirt, or collar left. I informed the Major, and begged him that I might have back the book in which I wrote my poems, as it would be of no value to any one, and my gold watch, which was a keepsake. The Major was astounded. 'Wait,' he said. 'You shall have them all back.' After a few minutes he brought me my book and my watch. 'Is there anything else?' he asked. 'No,' I replied. I was so delighted at getting back these two things that I did not mind about anything else. He apologised to me, and set about arranging for a meal. We were ravenously hungry, and the mere thought of anything to eat roused our drooping spirits. Just then a bleating herd of goats came past, along by the river. Some were caught and killed in a trice. As Joseph could not be got to do anything, and remained staring in front of him like an idiot, Scott roasted

some of the appetising meat. The noise of the guns gradually got farther away, and it made me sad to think that these were perhaps the last I should hear. How should I be able to get on without all the excitement of the strange life I had been leading? Although my state of mind was not very satisfactory, I bore my lot with equanimity. Resigned to the will of God, I reconciled myself to everything. At noon, in scorching heat, when we were led by the hand blindfolded, stumbling along into the camp, our misery reached its culminating point. We passed camp after camp, and then the river, being laughed at and ridiculed by the Kaffirs. Finally, we halted about 3 o'clock. I had become quite dizzy. A kindly soldier's hand gave me some water, and that did me good.

After a short wait, an officer came and took off our bandages. We found ourselves at a farm. We were placed with our faces turned to a wall, and had to wait the course of events in that position for some time. Officers came in and out, mounted men

galloped hither and thither, everything was in excitement. As I soon learnt, Kitchener had his headquarters here. I have forgotten the name of the farm: it was just by Klip Drift. At last an officer came in and demanded my name. I gave it to him and handed him my papers, which described me as a war correspondent. He immediately invited me to come among the officers, and I got some whisky and water, and afterwards some tea. All the officers were most polite. Unfortunately, I was unable to learn this gallant Major's name. After a wait the Major came out of the house again, and informed me that I should be set free on subscribing to certain conditions. I had to sign a declaration to the effect that I gave my word of honour to return to Europe by the very next ship. How gladly I signed that paper! He then made out a pass for us all; and at 6 P.M. on the 17th I was a free man again. We drove and rode to Jacobsdal. On the way thither we came across the traces of the morning's fight. Thirty-two horses lay there in a row, stretched out dead, pro-

bably the result of a cavalry attack. Splendid big horses, with their bellies horribly swollen. A flock of vultures were circling round them. It was getting dark when we met three Englishmen, who called on us to stop. We showed our passes, and they revealed themselves as the war correspondents of the 'Daily Telegraph,' 'Morning Post,' and 'Standard.' They had already heard in Jacobsdal of my ride through the thick of the hostile fire, and were delighted to meet me. Unfortunately, I had soon to start off again, in order not to arrive too late at the outposts. We reached Jacobsdal about 9 o'clock. We had to pass another big camp, which we got through with comparatively little difficulty.

There I was, in the same place again where I had spent so much time, but the picture had altered: there were English soldiers, guns, and horses everywhere. We rode by way of the ambulance, where the doctors were surprised to see me. When I explained the state of affairs, they all laughed at me. I then hastened to the hotel, where

again my appearance caused great astonishment. The daughters of the house received me with the pleasure which one shows on encountering a good old friend, and promised to bring me some supper immediately. At the big table, where once sat the Landrost, postmaster, and other people of quality, there were now only officers in khaki. I modestly took a place at the table, and soon a little elderly gentleman opposite to me, after having offered me some brandy, asked me who I was. I gave him a short account of myself, and he appeared quite satisfied. It was General Wavell, the captor of Jacobsdal. After supper I went to see the German doctors, who were sitting with a lot of bottles of beer in front of them. The mystery which had hung over my case of beer was now explained. These very bottles which I saw standing before me were the last that were left of my case. At all events, I drank some of them at last. We retired to bed comparatively late—I, naturally, in the open air.

Next morning, Saturday, the 17th, I got

my first wash after many days. I then sallied forth to find the Austrian military attaché. I found him in General Roberts's house. He was very astonished at seeing me here. I told him that I had only been a war correspondent, to which he replied that every one knew that I had been fighting. A gentleman, S—— by name, who was standing by, understood what had been said, and afterwards endeavoured to put difficulties in my way. I was presented to General T——, who examined my papers, and then gave me a letter for Major H——, Intelligence Officer. I took my departure, and went off to Major H——, who lived some distance away. S—— followed very soon after me. He spoke first with Major H——. I could not hear what he said, but I was very much afraid at the time that my liberation would be interfered with. The Major was, however, exceedingly polite. He gave me a chair, and let me wait a little. After a time, he handed me a letter, which I had to take to Major P——, the Provost-Marshal, in the provision stores. I could not find the Major,

and had to return to H——. He accompanied me, and we soon found P——: the latter, a celebrated cricketer, also treated me with the greatest politeness. After a long conversation, he told me that I should come to him again at 5 o'clock. Meanwhile I returned to the hotel, where the good hosts gave me some of their own meal. The poor people were very depressed, as their son and brother had been dragged off as prisoners. Here I made the acquaintance of many officers, and took my place among them as an old comrade. My narrative and their own provided plenty of material for conversation. General Wavell, a particularly good-natured man, took part in this exchange of experiences. Colonel Henry also, who was convalescent, joined us. In spite of the wounds in his face and shoulder, he was about again, and was now hastening to join his regiment. He laughed very much when he saw me, and asked me where I had been taken prisoner. That officer who had interested himself so much in me was named Major W——. When I said that

I did not know what to do with my wagon, mules, horses, and Kaffirs, he asked to see them. I sent for my equipage, &c., and he bought the whole lot for 60*l.* It was not much, but better than nothing. The time was now approaching for my severance from the god Janus. Though my privations and hardships had been great, there is something so fascinating about war that I was almost broken-hearted at the thought that I should hear no more shell, shrapnel, and rifle fire. Now I had to part from this splendid English soldiery, these weather-beaten, smart fellows, the beautiful horses, the guns, ammunition and provision wagons, to return to the world of peace and personal safety—to the world of boredom.

At 5 o'clock I went to Major P——, who informed me that I had to start in a quarter of an hour, together with a big convoy for Modder River station. Fortunately I had made the acquaintance of Colonel B——, and he invited me to take a place in his wagon.

It was a great ox-wagon, in which one

could sit and chat comfortably, while two Kaffirs, with a very long whip, urged on the eighteen oxen. Colonel B—— was an able soldier, and was quite conscious of the mistakes that had been made previously. He was of opinion that all the old principles had been revolutionised by the introduction of the magazine rifle and smokeless powder. Besides the Colonel, there were three other officers present. One of them was named Captain T——, K.O.S.B. (King's Own Scottish Borderers). We crawled along very slowly. On the way some Kaffirs were captured who were armed with Martini-Henrys. Their rifles were taken away and they were brought along as prisoners. We met numbers of troops on the march, especially artillery, and some of the big ships' guns whose shells I had seen bursting every day. It was late at night, I think about 1 o'clock. Just before reaching the camp we halted, and lay down on the ground and slept splendidly. I had a little mound of earth as a pillow. Very early, about 5 o'clock, we started off again. The whole camp lay

stretched out before me. I knew every stone there, for I had often observed the English with a telescope from the neighbourhood of Heyster's gun. And now I was a prisoner. A large detachment of Highlanders, with bagpipes playing, marched along through the deep sand. It is a fine sight to see these big, well-built men in their kilts, striding along.

We walked to the station, and from there a lieutenant conducted us to Major R——'s Intelligence Office. This gentleman showed us a space where we might take exercise, and informed us that the train would start at 7 o'clock. He then conducted us to the officers' mess, where we had a splendid breakfast—tinned sausages and tinned bacon. I had not eaten with so much satisfaction for a long time, and since noon of the previous day I had seen nothing eatable. We started at last, at 1 o'clock. As we went we saw camp after camp alongside the railway.

Belmont and its battlefields passed before our eyes. The grave of an English officer and some soldiers lies enclosed with stones just by Belmont station. Towards evening

we arrived at the Orange River. There were a number of officers standing on the platform; others were eating at long tables, the restaurant was crowded. We wanted to get in, but it was not possible. We saw eating and drinking going on, but could get nothing. So, disappointed, we had to go on further.

Next morning, Monday, the 19th, when we awoke, we were crossing the Karroo desert. My throat was as dry as the sand of this desert, and it was only towards evening that we got some refreshment. I ate and drank like a wolf. A Captain G—— got in at De Aar, who was being sent home on account of a serious attack of dysentery, which he got on the march to Kimberley. I sat in a compartment with him and Captain T——, and we tried to pass the time as best we could. The war-like appearance of the line and stations had ceased. We no longer saw exclusively khaki—plain civil clothing began to appear here and there, and one saw that one was getting further and further away from that theatre of war, of which I had become so fond.

Very early next morning, the 20th, we reached Cape Town. Before me stood the huge, high Table Mountain, an old acquaintance which I had not seen for four years, and there lay the same old Cape Town unchanged. Now came our final sufferings. We were conducted from one place to another, and eventually to Major D——. He was a charming man, and talked a long time with me. He showed me and presented me with maps, and was altogether the very soul of good-nature and straightness. From here I made the final tramp to Colonel C——, who pronounced the words of release. I had to sign something and promise to start next day by the s.s. 'Briton,' and then at 2 o'clock on Tuesday, February 20, I was free. But that was not the end of my troubles. I had not a penny in my pocket. I had a cheque-book on Pretoria, where 1,600*l.* lay in the National Bank, and had also to claim 60*l.* of Major W—— for wagons and mules, but not a sixpence in my pocket.

I had such a wild and dirty appearance

that when I asked for a room at the Mt. Nelson Hotel I was flatly refused. I drove to the Grand Hotel, where I had been known four years before, and they gave me rooms for myself and my servant. I then got into a bath, had my flowing beard shaved off, and presented a somewhat more respectable appearance. I now had to obtain some money at any price, and inquired for the Austrian Consulate, but no one could tell me where it was. After wandering about for some time, I went to the Post Office, and there obtained the necessary information. When I arrived at the Consulate I was received by a Baron Ramberg. I was informed that the Consul was very pressed, and that I had better go in to him at once. What could this Consul have to do so pressing in Cape Town? The Consul, named Hirsch, received me with a friendly shake of the hand.

I showed him my Pretoria bank statement, explained to him my situation and the absolute necessity for me to start the next day, that I must buy clothes and linen, as

I had lost everything in the war, and a lot more besides. Eventually Ramberg thought that he knew the manager of the African Bank, and would go there with me. We found the manager, who informed us that it was forbidden for them to have any business dealings with the bank at Pretoria, so we returned to the Consulate again. And, after tedious ineffective negotiations, as if I were a man not to be trusted, I received from each of these gentlemen three pounds. On going away I inquired what countrymen there were of mine in Cape Town. I was informed that Herr Strakosch was there. I now felt safe. I hurried to him, and he simply asked, 'How much do you want?' '200*l.*,' I said, and in five minutes I had it. Herr Strakosch was an Austrian who, in spite of his youth, had obtained a confidential position in the house of Zöiz & Co. at Johannesburg. By his kindness he had helped me out of the most unpleasant situation in which I was ever placed. I will leave it to the reader to form his own opinion as to the behaviour of our Consul and his secretary. That evening,

after I had made my purchases, I dined right well with Captain T—— at the Mt. Nelson Hotel, and drank the first champagne I had tasted for three months.

The next day, the 21st, I breakfasted with Strakosch and his friend, Count Sizzo Noris, at the Mt. Nelson. We afterwards sat down to coffee and cigars on the terrace. An English colonel, whose acquaintance I had made on the journey, and whose name I forget, came with a gentleman I did not know, who was dressed in khaki, but looked like a schoolmaster, and joined us. The conversation turned on my being taken prisoner, and then set free. The unknown gentleman shouted angrily, 'Without any exchange?' and could hardly get over it. He then said it was very easy to go to the war if one let one's self be taken prisoner as soon as things went wrong. I replied to him that it was only a man who had never heard a bullet whistle, and yet considered himself justified in expressing his opinion on everything, who could talk like that.

Then came the embarkation. By chance

I had the best ship that plies between the Cape and London—the 'Briton.' Accompanied by my friends I went on board at 3 o'clock, and at 4 o'clock we steamed away with delightful weather and a glorious, smooth sea. The great Table Mountain bade me farewell, and as the 'Briton' glided along I reflected with gratitude on the magnanimity of the English officers whom I had encountered during the last few days, while I was in the humiliating position of a prisoner. 'May old England prosper!' That was the feeling in my heart as I quitted this corner of the Dark Continent.

CHAPTER VIII

GENERAL REFLECTIONS

THE 'Briton,' the biggest and finest ship of the Union Line, of over 10,000 tons, with a speed of twenty-two knots, brought me home. There were not many first-class passengers to occupy the spacious cabins and dining-saloon, and of these very few could be called pleasant companions. My great friend was Captain G——, who was being sent home sick, and with whom I had already made the journey to Cape Town. He belonged to the Scots Greys, and was an extremely nice man. Two Englishmen from the Zambesi district and the ship's captain made up our clique. We had an uneventful voyage, without any particular excitements.

G——, a Mr. D——, who came from the Zambesi district, and belonged to the Duke of F——'s family, and I were elected as a

committee for amusements, but the election was opposed by a German as invalid. There was another election, and we were chosen unanimously. The captain, with whom we generally played 'Bridge,' was a charming man, a real English gentleman. There were but few ladies, but among them some very pretty and agreeable ones. I wrote diligently at this book, in order to have it finished by the time I arrived; and ate and drank as much as I could, to make up for the privations I had undergone. Seventeen days is a long time, and the sea was not always all that could be desired, although I cannot complain of any particular storms. On March 2 we met the 'Mexican,' which signalled to us by flag that Cronje and 4,000 men had been taken prisoners at Paardeberg Drift. I was not at all surprised. I had seen that it was inevitable, once the attempt to break through at Olifantsfontein had failed. Still, all praise is due to Lord Kitchener for his clever dispositions.[1] The

[1] The author is evidently not aware that Lord Roberts alone was responsible for the strategy which led to Cronje's surrender.—ED.

former Sirdar of Egypt is without doubt the most talented English general, and possesses all the qualities of a great leader. He is, of course, unpopular with the English Press, and perhaps with the officers of the army, for he is quite indifferent to suffering, stern and determined. Yet, granting that he is unsympathetic, is sympathy a necessary quality in a soldier?

The English army has different traditions and customs to the armies of the Continent. A want of consideration for others would be looked upon as quite natural in Germany and Austria. One must remember that the standing army and its institutions have been always prohibited. Charles I. soon realised that the power of the ruler only rested in the standing army, and his conflict with the Parliament originated in his desire to start a standing army. The result was his overthrow and execution. James II. attempted the same thing, and was equally unsuccessful. At that time the soldiers were under civil law, and desertion and insubordination were hardly punishable. It was only under

William of Orange that a special law was passed, which inflicted a special punishment on deserters. This was brought about by a whole regiment refusing to go to Holland, and deserting. It was pardoned, however, and distinguished itself signally by its bravery in the wars against Louis XIV. At the present time, punishments are much less severe, and the way the officers treat the men less strict than with us. Discipline is practically dependent on the man's sense of honour, and the result is successful. The Englishman has always been the best of soldiers : obedient by nature, he requires no drastic punishments. On the contrary, I believe such treatment would undermine his obedience. At the time of the Stuarts the soldiers were very highly paid ; a man received seven shillings a week—just about as much as he does now, but at that time it was worth four times as much. Scotland, a very poor country, recruited its soldiers from the highest strata of society. The prestige of certain old regiments is the same as ever, and the social position of the soldier so high

that they outweigh the poorness of the pay. This is quite right so long as England considers her small army adequate; but now, when the war is over, it will be necessary to think of reorganisation. England cannot introduce general conscription, or she would cease to be a Colonial Empire. It would interfere with the right of emigration, and the possibility of young men seeking their fortunes abroad. The practical Englishman knows exactly how important this right of emigration is for his country, and what great advantages they possess in this respect over the Continent, where it is impossible to leave the confines of the Fatherland till the whole time of service has been put in. The English say that the militia replaces the standing army perfectly. I will admit this to a certain extent; and the Yeomanry and the Volunteers have proved in South Africa that they fight well, but their employment is restricted, and is only conceivable against an irregular enemy, similar in training to themselves. Now, more than ever, training is the important factor, and in the future the

victory will rest with the troops which, though numerically weaker, are better drilled. The English officers are quite conscious of it, and they do not doubt that something will have to be done. I had time on the 'Briton' to read the European newspaper reports of the war, and was astonished to find so many untruths and erroneous impressions contained in them. The Press failed first by representing the solution of the business as quite easy, and later by holding the English army to blame for their own failure to appreciate the situation correctly.

The Boers are poor soldiers, if we measure them by Continental standards, but then, in their own country, they are excellent. They are accustomed to the climate, have but few wants, and consequently supply is an easy business for them. They shoot well, and are wonderful judges of distance in their own country. They know their country and its secrets, and understand thoroughly how to ensure themselves against surprises; they possess in peace time everything that is necessary for war. And then their fanati-

cism has made the Boers great, organised them, and, in a way, taught them obedience. The most remarkable thing was their fire discipline. The Boers calmly allowed the enemy to advance quite close before opening fire, and then always took careful aim, while the English salvoes went away over their heads. Another point which the Press has failed to appreciate is the fact that the Boers were mounted, while the English were on foot—a matter of the greatest importance in this hot climate. No Continental army would have done better than the English with the same or even somewhat greater numbers, and I personally doubt if, as regards practical equipment, technical smartness and readiness, a Continental army would have done so well. The Boer is an enemy such as never has been and never will be met again. Mounted sharpshooters, provided with the best of arms, acclimatised, fanatical, and accustomed to campaigning, are very formidable opponents, and cannot be wiped out like mere herds of armed men. It is to be remembered that the Boers have the sharpest

eyes conceivable, that they understand as no one else does how to cover themselves from view; and these are advantages which outweigh the defective leading and the discouraging effects of being on the defensive. In addition to this, the Boer artillery, though not strong numerically, had the latest patent guns, much better than the English, and they knew how to use them. If the leading of the Boer side left much to be desired, still every individual possessed such innate talent in selecting the suitable place for himself that, on the defensive, this defect was not felt. If their higher leading failed as regards large bodies, still it must be recognised that in small detachments they manœuvred excellently. The Boers would have achieved far greater results had they but acted also on the offensive. This they could not be got to do, and to this fact they owe their destruction.

It is much more difficult to assume the offensive; it requires exact orders, single control, absolute working together, and a great deal more. For this the Boers were wanting in interior organisation and discipline,

and their officers in training. The Boer is a man of ambushes, of the trickeries of war, as formerly was the Sioux Indian. The English, who in character and tactics know but the one word 'straight,' were consequently the more frequently sacrificed to the cunning of the Boers. In every position which the Boers occupied, some wily snare was prepared to catch the English.

At Modderspruit and Colenso it succeeded admirably. At the Koedoesberg fight, De Wet showed me the road which the 'Rooibatjes' (the redcoats, as they called the English) must take, and when the German ambulance took up its position just there, it was sent away so as not to interfere with their advance. Had the English been pushed forward then, not a man would have escaped. They drew back, and we did not know why; I learnt later that it was only a feint. All the fortifying at Magersfontein was carried out with every stratagem of war. At those places where an attack was most probable no trenches were thrown up, so that nothing might disturb their advance to

certain destruction. These subtleties rendered reconnaissance very difficult. One read in the papers that the bad reconnoitring by the English baffled description, and their general training was condemned on those grounds. As an eyewitness I must protest against these attacks on the English army. The reconnoitring patrols which were sent out had to examine many square miles of barren country and spy the enemy. This country could not be reconnoitred by a few men; regiments were necessary, and even they would have been forced to pull up in front of the entrenchments. I do not think any one has ever succeeded in reconnoitring a fortified position. The English, both in Natal and on the Modder River, always had to deal with an enemy who was entrenched. When the Boer did venture into the open country he succeeded in hiding himself from the view of the scout with marvellous adroitness. On February 11, when I was marching with 600 men along the Riet River to Koffeefontein, I saw how the Boers can hide themselves out of sight of a patrol.

When the patrol was seen in the far distance they all dismounted, and got under cover of the high bank of the Riet River. The patrol came on, with point and flanking scouts, and crossed the river about two thousand yards away without seeing us. This patrol, of the Inniskilling Dragoons, never returned to the main body. The greatest difficulty for the reconnoitring patrols lay in finding their way back to their main body. I know now, from my own experience, how easy it is to lose one's way in this country. The reason is that the great level plain gives one nothing to take hold of. There are some flat-topped mounds, but they are all alike, and it is impossible to tell one from another. I, personally, have taken the wrong road frequently, both by day and night, and it has only been by accident that I have got back on the right track. It does not matter if one is riding in a friendly country, but for a patrol among enemies it is a matter of death or being taken prisoner.

Reconnaissance was practically impossible with the enormous extent of the Boer

positions, because the bare plain offered no sort of cover for the scout. The reason why the Boers spread out over a big tract of country is that they are accustomed to drive along herds of oxen, sheep, and donkeys to pasture, for they get no other food. The many horses have also to be fed, so that they must keep large tracts of pasture land. A further difficulty for the reconnoitrer is the matter of water. A patrol was bound to avoid all farms, so where were they to drink? And in this country one must drink every two hours. For the main body of the English army the question of water was still more important. An advance was limited to the next watering-place—that is, from river to river. French's march from Graspan to Kimberley led over two rivers, and he finished having lost nearly all his horses. Consider what would have been the condition of the horse supply if this sort of thing had gone on. The climate allows but a very cautious use of horseflesh, and that at a slow pace. I did not respect this principle sufficiently to start with, and lost three horses.

The two which I had at the end were quite useless.

With regard to the service of security during the fight, which, according to the newspapers, was so completely neglected, I was not present at the battle on the Tugela, but have talked with many eyewitnesses. Colonel Long, the commander of the batteries which were taken, doubtless acted rashly, and had not satisfied himself as to whether the enemy was in rear of his position or not, but he was bound to assume that his left flank was in no way endangered, as Buller had done nothing for the defence of this flank. Again, here the Boers employed their cunning to entice the enemy into the noose, and with success. The explanation as to why the Boer position was not reconnoitred by the English is that it lay on the far side of the river, which was crossed for the first time in the course of the fight. Long went straight away forward, because he could not shoot from behind his own troops. Colonel Long was heroically courageous, and with it, as is so often the case,

somewhat incautious. One cannot on that account indiscriminately condemn the whole service of security in the battle.

The principles of the service of security are the same with the English as with us, and the Continent will experience some surprises in this respect in a future war.

The English technical troops are splendid. The railway and telegraph corps worked wonderfully. We know, of course, that the English are the best builders of railways. In the Colonies the railways seem to start up out of the ground for hundreds of miles. In South Africa they repaired railways that were damaged in less time than the Boers had taken to damage them.

The supply of the army leaves much to be desired, and I expect that when the war is over those who are responsible will be called to account. I was not at all surprised when, later, I heard of the swindling which went on over the purchase of horses in Hungary.

I may count myself fortunate, having taken no active part in the war, to have finished my expedition as a prisoner, and so

to have had the opportunity of seeing this splendid army under various conditions. Previously, I had Continental ideas with regard to English troops, but I have been converted. The English army reminds me vividly of our own army previous to 1866. At that time we had the best army in the world, but as it was practically unarmed it could do nothing; that it was brave, the Prussians can testify. The tone among the officers was similar to that in the English army—*noblesse oblige.*

When I think of the English officers my heart grows weary. Men who are decimated, shot down like rabbits at a drive, and still remain so kind-hearted and so chivalrous, show themselves to have the right blood in their veins.

I can only repeat that the English officers and the English soldiers have shown in this war that the profession of arms does not debase, but rather ennobles man. I must at the same time add that the Boers were in no way wanting in humanity. Men of the wilderness, as they are, they have always

shown themselves humane. I have, with my own eyes, seen how they have taken prisoners men who had been firing on them. This war has had its good side, and I think I may say that never has a war been fought in so civilised a manner. English politics may be false, but the English soldiery is absolutely honest and brave. I do not think any one can doubt my *bonâ fides* if they but reflect on how I have been abused by the English press.

CHAPTER IX

MILITARY REFLECTIONS

I.—*General*

THE modern rifle, with its immense range and rapidity of fire, and smokeless powder, have completely upset the old principles of tactics. In the future the force which shoots best, and is best covered, will be victorious. In proportion to the increase of range of the rifle, the distance at which troops are deployed and manœuvred must be increased, and the size of the units diminished. In order that these greater distances should be rapidly crossed, infantry must be trained to move very quickly. While in the wars of the past an energetic offensive has led to victory, in the wars of the future it will lead to destruction. The more skilful leading

and the better trained and more mobile troops will win, independent of numbers and personal courage.

To satisfy these requisites, first of all the 'Divisions' must be reduced in size; in fact, I think it will be necessary to have two kinds—heavy and light. An Army Corps would then consist of one light and two heavy 'Divisions.' The present 'Division' is, from its numbers and the size of its train, difficult to move, and consequently, in war, flying columns have to be formed on every occasion. This proves better than anything how necessary it is that tactical formations of this kind should be created in peace time. Naturally, the question will be asked, Of what should these light 'Divisions' consist?

In the first place, of mounted engineers, of light artillery—that is to say, artillery armed with Q.F. guns of small calibre—infantry on bicycles and four-horse wagons capable of moving with ten to fifteen men at the trot, mounted sharpshooters, well-horsed ammunition wagons, and a light train; as much cavalry as possible, which

must be specially trained in peace time in fire action. The very best material must be recruited for these light Divisions, and they must be kept up to strength in peace time. They must make up for numerical weakness by their superior quality. Such a Division, consisting of a company of mounted engineers, four batteries of Q.F. guns, two regiments of cavalry, each four squadrons strong, six battalions of infantry each having a cyclist company and the necessary wagons for conveying men, with a light mobile ammunition park and as small a train as possible, would work wonders. The special uses of these light Divisions would be, in the first place, the occupation and holding of important positions, reconnoitring and preventing reconnaissance by the enemy, wide turning movements, and attacks on the enemy's flank. These are the first and most important tasks in modern warfare, and thus these Divisions will be called on to do the most valuable work, and, if they can succeed, will decide the war. The South African war has shown that numerical superiority no

longer plays the decisive *rôle* it did formerly, and that numerical inferiority can be made up for by occupying a suitable position. It thus becomes of first importance to occupy quickly and hold the favourable positions. The holding of the position is a simple matter, and so it resolves itself into being first on the spot. Another point which must not be lost sight of is that, in future wars, formations will be as broad and as shallow as possible. This is brought about by the necessity of always taking cover, and of reducing the size of the target as much as possible. The breadth of the fields of battle and of operations will be proportionately great; consequently the main object must be to increase the mobility of the troops, particularly of the infantry.

I will mention here a point which has nothing to do with organisation. Owing to the increase of depth of the dangerous zone, and the greater distances consequent on the increased range of fire-arms, communication has become infinitely more difficult, and therefore every means must be

employed to spare orderlies. In the battles which I have seen the orderly rode to almost certain death. The manner in which intelligence and news is carried must be made as rapid as possible. For this work there are two useful contrivances, the field telegraph and the heliograph. Whether the latter would work as well elsewhere as in sunny Africa I cannot say, but it certainly can be of use to us. But heliograph and field telegraphy will be of no use unless all, or at all events a great number, of our officers can telegraph as well as they read and write. To achieve this end requires continual practice. The best apparatus for telegraphy is the flash-light telegraph, which can be seen everywhere at night when worked by search-light, up to 100 and even 200 kilometres. We telegraphed to Kimberley from Colesberg, over 100 miles, by means of search-lights working on the clouds. By these instruments a general can issue his orders to huge forces simultaneously. Reconnoitring patrols can, by using the heliograph, spare their men, and make sure of

their information reaching. The knowledge of telegraphy must, to this end, be thorough, and not merely theoretical. At manœuvres, which in other respects are of little use, this should be thoroughly practised.

What I have already said as to the reduction of the size of the Division, I would also say with regard to the company and squadron. A company of 100 men is quite big enough. With the war establishment of 280 men to a company each officer has sixty to seventy men. How is it possible for him to keep all these men together in action, to command them, superintend the sighting, targets, &c., when they are all extending in order to try and obtain cover? How can he conduct a retirement, that most difficult and most necessary movement in modern fights? And how can he exercise his personal influence on his men? An officer can command at most thirty men in battle. The duties of an officer in modern warfare are great, and for their efficient performance both mental capabilities and personal courage are necessary. A subaltern officer must be

a good judge of distance. It is difficult, and requires endless practice. It is necessary both for infantry and cavalry officers, as the latter will very often have to decide how much he will extend his squadron, taking into account that each man must be able to obtain cover for himself. The advance in action must be such that each man can make his rush forward, without in any way considering his neighbour, only thinking of the lie of the ground. The advance in two ranks, such as one sees at manœuvres, is an absolute impossibility.

The closer one gets to the enemy the slower will the advance be, and the more cautious must every man become, till eventually he has to crawl along on his belly. We practise the exact opposite; we have the men stand up and attack with the bayonet. If the defender is clever he waits for this moment, for then not a man will escape him. The English gave up this method of attack very soon. The most difficult duty for the subaltern officer is the maintenance of fire discipline. To succeed in this it is necessary

that from the very beginning of the war every man be trained to shoot only when a target offers. It is no longer the case that the chance shot decides the day. It may have been the case with the rifles of 1866 and 1870, but it is not so nowadays; it is, on the contrary, the exception for the well-aimed shot to hit.

Salvoes and shooting by word of command upset a man in action and cause him to shoot aimlessly in the air. It happens but too often that the nervous man, unsteadied by the projectiles falling round him, fires shot after shot by way of steadying himself. What is the use of a shot fired in the air? One millimetre too high or too low, and the enemy will not even hear the whistle of the bullet. How is it possible, then, that a chance shot or a salvo should have any effect? How great is the superiority of a good marksman! Every general must have this clearly before him; training must be in the direction of creating good marksmen. To acquire this another method of target practice must be introduced. The man must be

taught to shoot with his rifle properly aimed, and always in a lying position. That is how he will fire in war, and he must accustom himself to it in peace. With such training there is hope that he may learn to shoot in the short time available. In order to keep the man in practice after he has completed his service with the colours, the State should institute obligatory musketry for reservists everywhere. The necessary expense should be willingly borne by the nation, as it would give better value than any other money spent on military objects. But not only the man—the officer must also be a good shot, and there should be no time lost in training him in judging distances and rifle shooting. In judging as to the fitness of an officer, one of the first requirements should be good eyes. How can a short-sighted man judge distance? The value of a body of troops depends on their marksmanship, their mobility, and their endurance. The lines on which peace training should be carried out are thus clearly evident. Victory, however, will only come to those troops

which are led according to the modern requirements of tactics. The immense extent of front which will be occupied by an army seems fabulous—hundreds of kilometres. The battle will last much longer than heretofore, and will divide itself into a number of isolated fights. The commander will, however, endeavour to strengthen his line in such a way that at a suitable spot he may take the offensive and break through the enemy's line.

The battle begins with the endeavour of each side to outflank the other, and ends with one side breaking through the enemy's line. It becomes a matter of finding the right spot and employing the best troops: the Light Divisions are suited to such work. The lie of the ground is so important a factor nowadays that the cunning of war again takes its old place. The Boers have taught us something, which may always be successfully carried out—the sham retreat, a slow retirement before the advancing enemy till you have him 'in cava manu.' That we may not fall a victim to similar

tactics, it is necessary to be very cautious when attacking. And now I come to what, more than anything else, require amendment—namely, the regulations as to the employment of reserves.

All deployments must be made under cover, and the advance, even if it be at some distance from the field of battle, made in extended order. All deep formations must be avoided when there is the least possibility of being exposed to the enemy's fire. Artillery fire does but little harm to troops extended, but the effect on troops in column is terrible. In war the art of self-preservation comes of itself, but if it be provided for in regulations, and practised in peace, it is more exactly and rightly carried out. The English have learnt it in this war, although they clung for a long time to their regulations. The higher leaders should observe at manœuvres how section commanders make use of the ground. The regulations lay down numbers, &c., so exactly, and allow so little room for initiative, that there is no wonder that military pedantry clings to the letter of the

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law without any regard for surrounding circumstances. Modern war does not want machines, but demands from every individual, down to the private soldier, independent thought and action. With regard to this I would point out that this initiative should be encouraged in peace time, and the man not be so tied to the apron-string. And so it is with regard to the issue of orders, which are always given without any knowledge of what may happen on the spot and the unexpected difficulties which may arise, and allow no latitude. Some little thing may prevent the carrying out of an order or reduce it to an absurdity. Blind obedience would then lead to the destruction of the force. The history of the South African war will furnish many such instances. It is necessary to be patient nowadays, to try all round and to avoid running your head against a wall. The laurels will come of themselves, if they are coming. A general must always count on the impracticability of carrying out his orders, and make his dispositions accordingly.

The question of the Reserve is now, has been, and always will be, the most difficult problem for the General. My opinion is that in future it will be less important to have big reserves than it was in the days of the bayonet assault, as now this way of breaking through is no longer to be expected. The number of reserves will depend, in the first place, on the nature of the ground, and then on the dispositions of the fight. It is important to have fresh troops to relieve those who have been exposed to fire and are tired. Such reliefs will, as a rule, take place at night. Night-time will be made use of in a way it never has been before. The reason there was so little night fighting in South Africa is because the Boers would never take the offensive, and the English, being ignorant of the country, were afraid of going astray. The force which has the courage to attack by night has a great advantage. The confusion is indescribable. Soon after my arrival in the camp I was witness of such a disturbance. A jackal ran against one of the empty tins hung on the wires in front of the

trenches ; a Boer awoke, thought the English were attacking, and fired. A second and a third, and the whole front fired, and over 200,000 shots were expended for nothing. The men only recovered their composure at daybreak. All the outpost sentries were shot down, and from that day on no one would go on outpost duty, so there were no more sentries put out.

One thing has proved quite wrong, and that is the distances of the regimental and brigade reserves from the fighting line. One must remember that the new rifle kills at 2,500 yards, and therefore the existing rules as to reserves are quite wrong. Troops in the firing line must always be deployed, and the reserves also, unless they find cover. As regards the entrenching of troops attacking, there is for and against. In the first place, it takes time, the man is longer at a certain spot than necessary, and then his hand shakes when he comes to fire after the digging. My opinion is that entrenching, for troops advancing to the attack, is distinctly disadvantageous, and that it is only of value

on the defensive. The greatest care is necessary not to expose troops to fire unnecessarily, for a section which has been fired on with any result is so demoralised that it cannot be induced to advance again, whereas a section which has not experienced fire, and is ignorant of the danger it runs, is much more easily brought forward to the attack. It is not at all an easy matter to induce men who are lying down to get up and expose themselves to fire. In this respect there will be great disillusions.

In the selection of positions it is necessary to always have it in one's mind to make retirement for the men as difficult as possible. With hills, put them in front of the hill, so that they will not desire to run back over the crest, exposing themselves to fire. Then they remain lying where they are. A hill is generally a disadvantage in the fight, and is only of use as cover for reserves, ammunition wagons, and horses. The chief danger of a hill or chain of hills is that it offers a splendid target for artillery fire. Nothing is so tempting to bombard as

a hill, a wood, or a cluster of houses. The Boers soon realised this, and acted on it. A hill is also unsuited as an artillery position, as the guns lose their sweeping effect. High ground should only be selected for an artillery position when the enemy cannot be seen from any other. In principle it is to be avoided. Copses and woods form the very worst cover, especially the latter, as the shells crashing into them have a terrible effect on the nerves. Occupy the edge of a wood, but keep out of the wood itself. The enemy is sure to squander his ammunition on the unoccupied wood. Men must be taught to avoid bushes in battle. I observed that most casualties were to be found behind bushes. This is explained by the fact that men fire on bushes because they make a splendid target, and it can be taken for granted that they are serving as cover. The thing is to take the real and not the apparent cover. Ditches and natural risings in the ground form splendid cover, and do not offer a striking target. One of the greatest mistakes in our peace training is the way we

seek for what is really but false cover when advancing to attack. Such objects are certain to be fired on, as they catch the enemy's eye. Behind one clump of bushes at Magersfontein 300 dead and wounded men were found, while there was not a single man to the right or left. Why was it? The English congregated there with the idea of hiding from the view of the enemy, and then the bushes formed a splendid target for the Boers, and they fired on them at random. It is a fact, of which I am convinced from experience, that a man always shoots in the same direction. He fires first on a certain spot because he thinks he has observed something there, and afterwards because it takes time to change. Therefore, once the enemy fires persistently on any place, move from it, either forwards or to right or left. We did this, and always with good results. I remember being alongside two guns which we had between Jacobsdal and Koffee-fontein: they were covering our right flank. When we had fired we ran away quickly for 200 yards, and then came a hail of shots

exactly over the guns, where there was no one left. We repeated this numbers of times with success. One must not forget what a small target men offer at those great distances, unless they are massed together. The English, to start with, manœuvred exactly as our troops do on the drill-ground, firing with one rank kneeling, and the other standing behind. The officer gave the direction with his sword, and then ordered 'Fire!' They soon gave up this sort of stage business. It is still adhered to on the Continent. The kneeling position for shooting proved a failure. The man shoots worse in this position than in any other, and offers as a target to the enemy all those parts of the body which it is most desirable to protect. A man must learn to lie down and to run if he is to manœuvre successfully. Avoid like poison those 'localities' on which artillery fire is most effective. A shell striking the ground does little damage, and, as a rule, does not burst; but if it strikes a wall or a tree it may kill a whole section, and the history of war teaches us that fights rage

most round 'localities,' churchyards and farms. If I were a commander I should do my best to entice the enemy into such places, in order to destroy him for certain. An ideal position is one where the fighting line is in the open, and behind them is natural cover in the form of rising ground here and there, while to right and left is quite level and open, preventing an advance of the enemy under cover against the flanks. Such a position is worth a whole army corps. Magersfontein was like this, and Cronje could have held it with 8,000 men against 60,000, had he not been manœuvred out of it. Artillery in the open is ridiculous. The shells come buzzing round like bees round a lime tree, but hit no one. Men soon learn to despise the shell under these circumstances, and get accustomed to artillery fire, which is a great point gained. I have seen the Boers cooking their coffee under a vigorous bombardment, and with the bullets actually falling in the pot. When the shell burst, doing no damage beyond scorching hats and clothing, they laughed like children,

All feeling of fear had disappeared, simply because the English artillery fire had killed so few. It is very sound to expose troops to fire to begin with in such a way that they get used to it without suffering loss. Dash is almost a mistake ; in the higher commanders it is inexcusable. It is like making a move at chess with the castle, which is then taken by a pawn. In modern warfare the possible losses must be weighed against the results which can be obtained. We experienced an example at Trautenau in 1866. A hill was stormed there, and whole battalions sacrificed. I have seen that hill, and I do not think any one in possession of his senses could give the reason for so many men having been expended. Six guns would have cleared this little hill in half an hour. This action has, however, been so glorified, that at the present time the monument to Gablenz, the Field Marshal, adorns this hill. He was one of our most capable generals, and I do not believe that he ordered anything so ridiculous, but more probably that it was due to the carrying

out of an order which was interpreted too literally.

II.—*Cavalry*

To the cavalry will fall the most difficult *rôle* in the wars of the future. It offers the biggest target. I myself cannot properly depict the usefulness of this arm yet. The English cavalry produced but poor results in South Africa, although, there more than anywhere else, it had a *raison d'être*: it was only when combined with mounted infantry that it was to be feared. We are taught that the cavalry undertakes the reconnoitring duties, and prevents the enemy carrying out similar work; that at the beginning of a battle, when the opposing advanced guards come in contact, there will be great cavalry charges. It is said that so it has been, and so it will be. I do not agree.

The wars of the future will not commence in the same way as did the wars of the past. In peace time nowadays we are strategically at war. We know who we shall fight, and we have everything ready. Every garrison

commander even has his *ordre de bataille.* At the outbreak of war one Power will be on the offensive and one on the defensive. The Power on the offensive will at once push forward its cavalry, which it has waiting ready at the frontier. The defensive Power, if it be wise, will allow it to advance unhindered, and will then surround it and intercept it. That means the crushing of the invading force. How could a cavalry division attempt the sort of thing which was done by Count Hadik one hundred years ago, by Manteuffel in 1866, or by Rosenberg in 1870? It is assumed that cavalry will be sent against the invading cavalry, and that encounters will take place. It may be; but suppose this cavalry is ordered to work round, and if behind it there is infantry, which, say, is mounted, and that it will pour its fire into the hostile attacking division? And if this division, being forced to retire, is again fired on by a force which has meantime fallen on its rear? The answer will be given that this is impossible, as the cavalry division will be adequately screened. I doubt it. The

patrols must stop when face to face with the hostile cavalry; they can advance thus far, but no farther.

It will soon be proved that the cavalry of the invader produces but negative results, and it will be realised that the present system of reconnaissance is out of date, and that one civilian who is sent off in good time on his bicycle to gain information will effect more than a cavalry division. To reconnoitre successfully in war, a special corps, which is thoroughly conversant with the language of the hostile country, must be trained for the work in peace time. The cavalry can then work hand in hand, in small detachments, with such men. The commander of a patrol, if he takes a telegraph wire along with him, which he lays as he goes, or a heliograph, or an apparatus for wireless telegraphy, can do good service; otherwise he cannot. Both sides must do all they can to prevent reconnaissance. Small detachments of infantry must be spread along to shoot down patrols; to neglect to do this would be a great mistake.

I have never seen this done at manœuvres. The real services of security can only be efficiently carried out by marksmen, mounted or not. The more of them that are mounted the better. A country which can afford the money to keep plenty of such troops will possess an inestimable advantage.

A cavalry division is useless against half a battalion, and if the latter has but the nerve to let them advance to 200 yards the division will be decimated.

The value of mounted infantry for reconnoitring work is evident. A light division, such as I have previously described, would be of inestimable value at the beginning of a battle. It would spread itself all over the country, like a cloud of dust. All cavalry is very sensitive to rifle fire, for the simple reason that it is defenceless; therefore there is no object in sacrificing, maintaining, giving up roads and space to huge masses of cavalry if small forces can achieve the same results. Nowadays, cavalry is incapable of fulfilling its task, and becomes rather an encumbrance to the commander. This is a sad

conclusion for a devoted cavalryman to come to, but it is true, and cannot be avoided.

This, however, is by no means the death sentence of this arm ; on the contrary, I will endeavour to show that it is destined for the greatest duties. In the first place, the modern cavalryman must get over his objection to dismounted fire action. It is necessary that certain old practices cease. Nowadays, the greatest care is bestowed on the horse in peace time. This animal is groomed without ceasing, and when he is finally clean the saddlery and kit are taken in hand. Lest the man should do too little cleaning, the saddlery and boots are greased twice a week and then polished again, which means no end of work. Benedek's celebrated order, given the night before the battle of Königgrätz, 'Buttons must be cleaned,' will live for all time. In days when the army served to increase the brilliance of the Court, shiny horses, polished bridles, boots and equipment were in keeping ; but nowadays ? I do not mean that the soldier is to be dirty, but I would reduce all this 'spit and polish' as far

as possible, so that only so much time may be occupied by it as is essential, and that it be not looked on as the object of his training. According to my views, there should be but one idea animating every unit, and that is to render itself as fit as possible for active service. That horse is fittest which can best stand the hardships of war; it must be able to withstand adverse climates. In order to do this, it must be in the open as much as possible in peace time. Instead of always being groomed in the stable, it must be running about out of doors. It must be accustomed to pass the night in the open, and be systematically hardened in winter. In that way a horse will be got fit to undergo the hardships of a campaign. The man will gain all the time he now spends in grooming for useful training. The same thing applies to saddlery and boots: saddlery should be made of raw hide. The boots are the most inappropriate covering for the feet it is possible to conceive. With the high boots, which never fit, walking is torture, and to require a man to work on foot in them is

cruelty ; and then they are hot in summer and cold in winter. The cavalryman must be provided with laced boots and putties. They are both comfortable and practical. The stable and cleaning duties must be reduced to a minimum, and the cavalryman must be given a training which will make him the pick of the army.

The present system of equitation makes a man into a riding-school horseman. It is useless. The most important thing for him is to get along over the country, and to do that he must get out of the riding school into the open. He must learn to ride over obstacles, and that he cannot do and is not taught. The cavalryman is brought up to be an automaton and trained like a poodle, which is a great mistake.

I do not by any means intend that smartness is to suffer—on the contrary, it is impossible to be too smart, and nothing which adds to it must be done away with ; but grooming and riding school in no way increase smartness. Smartness is the means to an end, but not the end itself. Alas for

the force which deviates from the traditions of exact execution of all orders—it would become but a miserable militia; and, as to discipline, any laxness is fatal to an army. Discipline must pervade all ranks, the regulations be a religion, and the commander a god. But, for peace and war, one does not want automata. What is required is to awaken the intellect, strengthen it, lead it in the right way, and recognise its existence. The regulations must allow room for initiative to the cavalryman above all, and must place confidence in him, so that he may feel he is the *élite* of the army, and may endeavour to live up to it.

Such a cavalry, in my opinion, will be the deciding factor in future wars; but officers and men must be mounted marksmen, who ride as dashingly as they shoot well. To obtain this, old traditions must be rooted out, and those who are in authority and belong to a time that has gone by must accommodate themselves to the altered conditions. There is one more point I would mention. Two big forces of cavalry can

only come into contact where the nature of the country permits it. It will not happen very suddenly, for the advanced guard with cavalry is considerably farther forward than is the case with ordinary troops. Consequently, the cavalry commander has time to make his dispositions. In the regulations it lays down the numbers to be deployed, the numbers in reserve, and how many on the flanks in a cavalry charge. My idea is that the best method of carrying out a cavalry attack would be for a portion of the reserve to be employed in dismounted fire action, and they would fire into the hostile cavalry till the moment of impact. The magazine carbine is a suitable weapon for this. I would allow no cavalry manœuvre to be executed except in combination with fire action. In order that it should succeed it must be practised thoroughly, and not with the traditional disinclination and contempt. The cavalry is not a sporting parade service; but, when trained and led according to my ideas, the most important and decisive arm for modern warfare. I will take the oppor-

tunity of mentioning what was to me very wonderful with the Boers. When a man brought the reins down over his horse's head the horse stood there steady as a rock, no matter what happened. A cavalry force which is going to enter into fire combat dismounted must train its horses to stand quietly, and regard this as a most important part of the training. In order to give effect to such innovations, the inspectors must take the matter up, and the regulations must be altered. Cavalry officers must be continually practised in shooting, judging distance, and telegraphy, without, however, neglecting their riding.

One word as to pace. The Boers have two paces, which are excellent for marching, and which enable one to cover the ground with the minimum of fatigue. The slower is the walking amble. The horse trots with his hind-quarters and walks quickly with his forelegs, without, however, breaking into the regular trot, which uses up so much energy. The second pace is a gallop amble. The horse trots with his hind-quarters and gallops

with his fore. It is not half so tiring for a horse as the regular trot or gallop. A Boer never rides any other way, and he gets along quickly without exertion either to himself or his horse. The horses soon learn it, and then they will never again use the natural paces.

In modern war, cavalry has the hardest task, and will suffer most losses, but it can win great glory. There is one thing which must be laid down as a law, and that is that cavalry is not for charging, however amusing and cavalry-like it may be according to ruling ideas. The result of a victorious charge is very questionable: no one is seriously wounded, and the ground gained is just so much as the hostile infantry allows. The strong point of the cavalry will be its ability to advance rapidly, but even that will lead to nothing unless the men are serviceable for fire combat. Reconnaissance is only practicable when protected by a well-aimed fire. It is necessary to drive back small infantry detachments and patrols, and that cannot be done with the sword or lance.

To the great question as to whether the sword or lance is preferable, I would answer that the sword is useless, and the lance but little better. Carbine and lance do not go well together, and I would introduce the bayonet. The cavalryman must carry his carbine in his hand with bayonet fixed, with the butt resting in a leather shoe, which is made fast to the saddle and hangs with the stirrup. When attacked mounted, one can use the light carbine with bayonet excellently. Of course, it is humiliating for the proud cavalryman to have to ride thus. The officer must keep his sword, as it is indispensable for commanding. I would divide the cavalry into two groups, as in old times—heavily equipped for fighting, just as I have depicted, and lightly equipped for communication and orderly duties. The former I would thoroughly train in fire combat, the latter I would arm with swords and revolvers. The latter would fulfil the duties of our present cavalry, on small active horses, not needing to carry heavy loads in war time, as their feeding could be easily managed.

This light cavalry must be recruited from small intelligent men, and their training must be principally in the art of riding and using their intelligence. The orderlies are the men who are most exposed to the enemy's fire, and so they must be the bravest men.

I will now discuss the cavalryman's equipment from my point of view. To be practical it must be suited to what is required of it. The modern tunic, which represents the service coat, is the exact ideal of what a coat should not be. The man wants pockets ; the coat must be cool in summer and warm in winter, and therefore easy to fasten and undo. Our tunic has no pockets, is tight and hot in summer, cold in winter, always uncomfortable, and must never be worn open. The most awful thing about it is the collar. The origin of this uniform dates from the beautiful parade coat of the time when the army was as much an adornment as a power of the Court.

With the transition to a national army a compromise was made as regards uniform. They adhered to the tradition without having

or desiring the means to give them their former brilliancy. The uniforms thus became the ugly and unpractical soldiers' dress we now have. It is only in practical England, where in everything else the army is organised similarly to ours before 1866, that the uniforms have remained tasteful as formerly, but there the soldier has a proper service dress. The red coat and the fur head-dress, which only serve to delight the eyes of the people in peace time, remain at home, and he takes into the field a practical uniform suited to the climate. That must become the universal principle. A parade uniform and a service uniform—it would not be very serious for the military budget, and is practically indispensable. The service uniform must be of the same colours as one finds in nature. To fulfil the requirements of modern tactics the target must be reduced and rendered invisible to the enemy. The present-day soldier must resemble the sportsman, and dress like one, with the idea of escaping the eye of the game. Brown and green would be the best colours for the

Continent. The man must, as in Frederic's time, wear his coat open, and only button it up when necessary. An open coat is always more comfortable than a buttoned-up one, fits better, and is more airy. The English were dressed in a very rational manner, but they overlooked this, and in South Africa an open coat would have been much better. Then, the waistcoat must serve as cartridge pouch. The Boers had such waistcoats, with three rows of pockets for cartridges. This proved itself to be the best way of carrying a large number of cartridges.

The cavalryman must have plenty of ammunition—I should advocate 300 cartridges, which he would have to carry himself and not stow away in kit-bags. If the man have the carbine in his hand he can easily carry this amount of ammunition with him, partly in the waistcoat and partly in a bandolier. The Boers carried 300 rounds in this way.

Loose pantaloons and putties make up the service uniform. The collar, to fulfil its object, must be a neckcloth such as our

grandfathers wore in the thirties. The head-dress should be, at home, a fur cap, which can be drawn over the ears. Then a big loose cloak with folds, such as the Italian dragoons have, so as to serve also as a blanket. For peace one must adhere to beautiful uniforms, as the prestige of the troops and the self-confidence of the individual are considerably increased thereby. There is a great difference between the appearance of Prussian Uhlans on the march and a body of cavalry in khaki. As to the horse, I think it is a mistake to fasten on the corn behind. I would make it fast in front, as high as possible, to hang right and left of the pommel, and have the light wallets behind. Every one who has had to do with horses knows that a horse carries weight far more easily forward.

III.—*Artillery*

The South African war has, in one way, been especially interesting in that it has given us a practical exhibition of every sort of gun at work.

I personally understand but little of artillery, but there are certain things which strike even a layman.

The effect of artillery has fallen below that of infantry, as the infantry rifle now carries farther than the gun of thirty years ago. Still, however, it remains terrible when directed on badly-led troops.

The artillery here always commenced the fight, and always will do. Every battle begins with the artilleries firing on one another at excessive ranges without any decided target. It reminds me of the mutual abuse before the battle began in olden times. If I were a general I should discontinue this traditional manner of opening the fight, and for the following reasons :—In the first place, I hit nothing. It is only the commander of the guns who is convinced that he is inflicting terrible damage. A gunner can never miss. In the second place, I show to the enemy my exact position and the stages of my advance. Thirdly, I give the enemy the opportunity of firing sooner than is necessary. The artillery should only develop their

whole strength when the masses stand opposed to one another and then against artillery. Above everything, do not believe too much in accurate shooting at long ranges. Firing at ranges of over 4,500 yards is madness.

There has always been a tendency to place the artillery on hills and mountains, which is only justifiable when nothing can be seen from the plain. The most effective shooting is from below upwards, while from above downwards is the most difficult, because the grazing effect is lost. In addition to that, the position on high ground has the disadvantage of offering a splendid target to the enemy. Guns should always be entrenched when possible, and to this end the *personnel* of the artillery should be thoroughly well trained in this work in peace time.

The chief value of artillery is in the covering of a retreat and in pursuit. If the enemy retires, the artillery must be pushed forward and pour in its fire. The effect will soon be apparent. An army in flight, crowding together, is excellent food for the

shell, and a force which has undergone this will be no more use for the rest of the war.

The pursuit, which used to be the special task of the cavalry, is now the business of the artillery, while the cavalry is sent with it to act as escort.

In my humble opinion the artillery should be differently organised. We have only two kinds of batteries—horse and heavy—leaving out mountain batteries.

The former are intended to accompany the cavalry. Now I would give a certain amount of light artillery to the corps artillery regiments, so that they would have a certain number of Q.F. guns and a certain number of long-range batteries. The former would consist of light guns of small calibre, the latter of heavy guns, of big calibre and long range.

The best type of light gun is the 5 c.m. Nordenfeldt-Maxim. It fires twenty-four shots a minute: the tube is prevented becoming hot by a water-jacket, and the whole gun is light and very effective. In the African war it has done wonders. With regard to heavy

guns the French Creusots are satisfactory, and carried further than any others used in the South African war.

It goes without saying that every gun must have fixed ammunition, and be provided with hydraulic brake to prevent recoil.

Such a gun is worth six of the old-pattern guns, as I could fire as many shots within a certain time with one of these modern guns as with six fully-manned old ones, without employing more than two men to work it.

The greatest difficulty is the judging distance, and so far no suitable apparatus has been discovered by which the range can be arrived at quickly and simply. When such an apparatus is discovered, war will cease. Till then war will remain always a dangerous, but still a very fascinating occupation.

I observed one thing worth noticing—namely, that not a single man was hit or wounded by a shrapnel bullet. These bullets seem to be quite harmless. The fragments of the case, when it bursts, are the only

things to be feared. With the English shell the case, as a rule, remained whole, and only the head was blown off. Shrapnel have not proved themselves satisfactory so far, and one should be chary of them.

Lyddite was a failure. I think it is too *rasant* and not sufficiently *brisant*. Powder, and that the black, is still best, as with it you can observe the effect of the shell well.

There is one question still to be solved, and that is whether a howitzer battery should not be added to an artillery regiment. I am entirely in favour of it. With howitzers it is possible to search out cover, and to fire on the horses, teams, and ammunition wagons. That such a battery may obtain the best results, it should be in telephonic or heliographic communication with a balloon.

Artillery is the arm which has made least progress in the general development of war-like material which has taken place. It has still a great deal to discover, to improve, and to originate. I am not a gunner, and cannot speak with any authority on the subject; still, I think that experts may derive some

useful hints from what I have said. There is one thing of which I am convinced, and that is that too much artillery does more harm than good, for it interferes with the mobility of the force. With the increase of length of the column from the additional draught horses comes additions to the supply columns and the train.

In 1870 the artillery was far superior to the rifle. Now it is the rifle which decides the day.

IV.—*Infantry*

I am not an infantry man, but I have obtained my knowledge by being an eye-witness of the war. It was evident to me that the infantry is now the arm which wins or loses the war. Everything depends on its quality. The first necessity for the men is to shoot well; the second, to shoot well; and the third, to shoot well. It is more difficult than one thinks, but it is practicable. Of course, it will not be arrived at by the existing system of musketry training. I will allow that an army such as I describe and

would have, costs double what the army does now, but I guarantee that it would effect five times as much. One of the cardinal errors is the idea that numbers will decide. A flock of sheep runs before one bull-dog ; a numerically strong army will run before a small but good force. Modern war requires Quality—not imaginary, but real. Marksmanship must be cultivated by all possible means, and with this goes the necessity for judging distance correctly. Practically nothing is done as to the finding of ranges. Theoretically, every company has its range-finder. What is one man among two hundred, who may be spread out over a kilometre? And then the fact of his appointment does not make him a capable range-finder. The light, the formation of the ground, the time of year, all have a great effect. In winter, over snow, a distance appears quite different from what it does in summer, when everything is green ; in the plains, again, absolutely different from what it does in the hills.

The English hit nothing — absolutely

nothing; and yet how they practise shooting on the ranges, what an amount of ammunition they expend every year, and what results they can show on the target in peace time! The target is a poor makeshift. The great mistake about target practice is that, except at field-firing, the man shoots standing or kneeling. Target practice should be carried out only in the lying position, and the targets should be very low. The whole business must be worked on a different system from the present one. We have very few shooting-ranges, because they cost money; and the targets are always at the same spot, so that every one knows the distance exactly. Every company ought to have its own range, and every section shoot daily. The targets must be frequently shifted, to practise the men in judging distance. Then those men who show aptitude must be selected, and put into a special detachment — the sharpshooters. These would then have to go through a very thorough training. Those who have shown no special talent would undergo a simpler course of instruction, at short ranges, with

more patience and less trouble. There are some men who never learn to shoot, in whom eye and frequently nerve are wanting, and they become encumbrances. The mere presence of a man on the battlefield frightens no one, the more so as one sees little or nothing of one's enemy. Masses of troops of bad quality are a disadvantage — they make the target bigger for the enemy and increase the accuracy of his shooting.

In my opinion the 'Nation in Arms' is a suicidal institution, unless one sifts out the bad element, which takes up as much space and requires as much feeding as the good. The principle of the 'Nation in Arms' is all right, but at the same time I would have a professional army of first quality: shorten the time of training of the conscript, but have an army which really is an army. The State that has the pluck to do this will be victorious in future wars: 500,000 men, picked troops, marksmen and soldiers, would conquer the world. I do not for a moment imagine that I have discovered this fact, for the Persians, Greeks, and Romans, at a time

when the armament was not so very different, have proved my theory. But this fact was never so true as now. The infantryman must be a sportsman, and must be able to conceal himself and to shoot like one. The possession of an army which fulfilled modern requirements would be of the greatest importance. One could at the same time, with a year of service, create a militia which could always do good service in case of necessity as reserves, and reinforcements, and could be employed on the line of communication, for the occupation of fortified posts, and guard work.

The next war will prove that these huge armies are a mistake. Whole army corps will starve, others be shot down. Imagine the retreat of an army of millions. The men will be driven together like sheep, and then, having no food, will die of hunger. A part must go back, and that will be impossible. And if this army surrenders, what is the enemy to do with hundreds of thousands of prisoners? He has not supplies enough for his own men.

One can easily imagine it; it is really a problem which cannot be solved. I saw at Jacobsdal an army of 50,000 English, which had advanced thirty miles, and had barely what was necessary for the feeding of the men. Now picture that, with the complicated apparatus of an army corps, one single officer of the general staff makes a mistake, and at once you have a big force with no food.

Suppose the case that, owing to unexpected circumstances, two army corps have the same objective, and all at once 80,000 men come together somewhere, instead of 40,000—what then? And if by chance in the midst of this confusion they are attacked?

If, in addition to that, all the roads are occupied by the train, which has marched so closed up that it cannot turn about—its horses tired, having marched all day; and then shell burst among them, troops fleeing from all sides, and the artillery tearing past at the gallop—and picture this with a conscript army.

All this can be caused by a trifling misunderstanding, a slip of the pen made by a

tired, overworked 'general staff' officer. Such a man, harassed with work, has to ride and think the whole day, and when he returns home has to make dispositions which take hours of fatiguing work. If errors creep in, is it to be wondered at? The modern army must be light as a feather, always mobile, and especially capable of retreating. A conscript army can only advance: it can take up room, consume provisions, fill up railways, but it can never be mobile.

What is the use of a battalion 1,000 strong who can none of them hit anything, who will miss a house at 200 yards, but who, when fired on by artillery, will suffer a loss of thirty per cent.? The same bit of country occupied by fifty marksmen, extended, who make ten per cent. of bull's-eyes, would achieve very different results. I am ready to prove it at any time. Give me fifty Boers, and I will bet that 1,000 men will not dislodge them.

It ought to be a warning to the leading Continental authorities to carry on their preparations differently from the way they

are doing—to strive after quality rather than quantity. The calling of a soldier is serious and difficult—not less so than that of a tailor or shoemaker. The fact that a man has learnt tailoring for three years would not enable him to make a good suit if he has been away for ten years at some other business.

Europe must give up the system of general conscription, both for military and social reasons. It is better to have one million expensive soldiers who are worth something, than three million cheap ones who are worth nothing. The stopping of work, the prevention of emigration, the taking away of a man from his calling, just at the most important age, is so great a loss in value and production to a nation that it should be easy to exchange it all for an expensive and good army. Look back at earlier times, when there was a standing army, and not an armed mob. No State is in the position to bear the necessary cost of making the conscript army really fit for service, and useful ; it is, therefore, better to attempt what is attainable. Professional

troops are indispensable, whether one adheres to the present system or not.

Curious as it may seem, it is for the infantry that the question is of most importance. The infantry man must be able to do two things perfectly—to shoot and march, both of which require continual practice. The infantry man must, therefore, stay with the colours as long as possible. The best shots must be mounted and taught to ride. The uniform must be altered in the same manner as I have already described for the cavalry, only, in addition, the knees and elbows must be double thickness or of leather, otherwise a man who is always crawling on his hands and knees would be in rags at the end of a fortnight. Knickerbockers and putties are more practical for the infantry also. In wet weather the man can change his putties, while he is obliged to keep on his wet trousers. Every man should have a spade, which can at the same time be used as a bayonet. A spade, made pointed, would replace the bayonet as a weapon on the few occasions it might be used. The English

had bad spades, with short handles and broad flat blades.

One thing is indispensable—a man must have a blanket for the night. Every company requires a wagon to follow on with these blankets. If an army gives its blood for its country, it is the country's duty to provide it with absolute necessities, and to make sacrifices to do so. The cost would be less if the bed blankets used in peace were made fit for service conditions.

The Mauser 1895 is by far the best of the modern rifles. It has at the same time the smallest calibre. The question as to big and small calibre is not yet solved. Each has its for and against. The small calibre has the advantage that the man can carry a large number of cartridges with him, but, on the other hand, the wounds it gives are slight. It would be wise in case of victory to make all the wounded prisoners, otherwise, in the course of a month, the greater number of them are gaily fighting again. The only alternative is a Convention by which every army will be bound to dismiss a man once he

is wounded. At the battle of Magersfontein all the officers of the Black Watch Regiment were wounded. That was on December 11; on February 7 they were fighting again at Koedoesberg. Healing is very rapid. This is a question which the military governments will have to consider. The Mannlicher rifle is too big for a small calibre rifle and too small for a big calibre, and possesses the disadvantages of both.

As regards train, there is no doubt that in Europe mechanical transport with steam-engines would be a success. They could be let out in peace time to contractors who have to provide freight. The English have achieved good results with it where it was feasible. With us at home, with roads everywhere, it would certainly be successful.

V.—*Preparations for War*

Every State knows, as a rule long beforehand, with what Power it is likely first to come to war. Preparations in peace time

are generally directed against a certain enemy. The most important matter is to prepare carefully for such war. We in Europe have on the Continent two likely possibilities of war—France-Germany and Austria-Russia. The plans have long since been worked out on both sides, and everything which can be done in peace time seems to have been done. Now, however, there are many things which have been taught by the South African war which have not been accepted or recognised by modern strategists. The lessons for the war of the future must be taken to heart, that modern arms have rendered it much easier to act on the defensive, and very much more difficult to assume the offensive. The gigantic armies will require tremendous fronts, both in regard to the strategical concentration and their maintenance. Let us take an instance. For example : suppose a war broke out between Austria and Russia ; then Austria would have to choose between a concentration in front of or behind the Carpathians. The former would soon prove impracticable, as

it would be broken in on everywhere by the enemy. The concentration would expose its broadside to the enemy, and could never be carried out. In order that it may go on undisturbed, it is necessary that the railways should be protected. In this case the Carpathian Mountains must be fortified, all valleys being blocked with impregnable works, so that one army corps could easily hold the several hundreds of kilometres. The concentration must then be carried out in Moravia, Bohemia, and Silesia. In order that this may proceed without danger, big connected fortifications must be built, with depôts in them, Cracow being used as a supporting point for the right flank to the north, taking advantage of the dip. In peace time all necessary provisions would be collected here under protection of the works, in order to leave the railways free for the immense amount of other work they would have to do. These serviceable defensive works would completely cover the line of retreat, and a turning movement could hardly succeed, as, *viâ* Saxony, Russia

would expose her flank too dangerously. Invasion has first to be prevented, and then, in the event of a defeat, a fresh point of support and second line of defence prepared. In the case of an advance the communication services are thus rendered easier and shorter.

The defensive position must be thoroughly prepared in peace time. Everything must be laid down, all distances measured, and maps prepared showing every range exactly. Thus the position would be impregnable, for the artillery would then pick off sparrows at 4,500 yards. Then the whole frontier is secure and the army is free to assume the offensive.

The offensive is the great problem of the future. Woe to him who hastens on from principle! I may refer to the game of chess: only too often is a castle taken by a pawn. The offensive correctly carried out, however, is decisive. Mobility will be the main point. The turning movement will be huge—200 or 300 kilometres will be nothing. The General must always take into account the possibility

that he may be forced to retreat, and provide that he does not then lose everything. Whole regiments will be lost by badly organised retreats. The retreat must be made safe. It follows, therefore, how cautious one must be in advancing, and how important it is to advance straight forward with your lines secure. The line in rear must always be fortified and converted into depôts, otherwise it will happen that whole army corps will starve. And at every fortification the first business must be the measuring and marking of ranges. The Boers did that. At every 200 yards they painted ant-hills white on the side towards them. This done, the artillery can hold any position, for their accuracy is ensured.

In fortification the main point is so to lay it out that it is covered by the lie of the ground, and hidden even from the telescopic eye of the enemy; and this can generally be done.

In the case of war between Russia and Austria the offensive must be taken *viâ* Posen to the North, in order to endanger

the line of retreat of the Russian invading army.

The source of information, which plays so great a *rôle*, should be handed over as much as possible to civilians. If they can lay a fine wire behind them in good time, one would often be connected by telegraph without the enemy observing it. The *personnel* must be got hold of in peace, and paid and trained.

The value of such information is inestimable. The Boers employ Kaffirs for this work. Of course, the news which they brought had to be accepted with caution.

One can agree on other signals with these spies—the firing off of rockets, the colours of which have a certain meaning. Suppose, for example, the theatre of war was in Poland: it would be of great value to have a man in Warsaw who could send news by telegraph concerning the movements of troops by means of some cypher, which did not attract attention, *viâ* Odessa and Constantinople. We received our best infor-

mation *viâ* Cape Town, Beira, and Lorenzo Marques.

War has become more of a science now that at any previous time.

Geniuses quick to learn and ready to discard false traditions will be successful.

God grant that our country may possess such a one!

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